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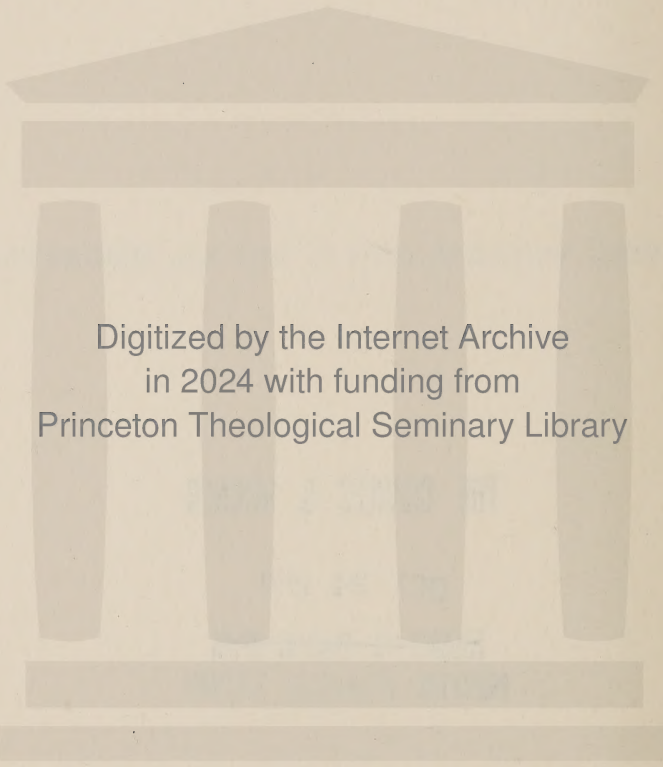


GROWING AND LEARNING IN THE KINDERGARTEN

THE CHARLES G. REIGNER

OCT 24 1961

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PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



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*Growing  
and  
Learning  
in the Kindergarten*



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*by Mamie W. Heinz*

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## *Foreword*

Here is a book addressed particularly to persons new in the teaching field and to those teaching again after years at home with their families. It is also for those who because they lack preparation in the field of early childhood education may be burdened with feelings of inadequacy and lack of knowledge regarding helpful resources. The experienced teacher will find here practical suggestions that will help her improve her ways of working. Those in need of renewal of faith in the value of their work with children will find new inspiration. Leaders in workshops, institutes, and short courses will welcome and use this material.

One important service of this book is that of helping churches review and evaluate their present weekday programs. Are the needs of young children being met adequately?

Valuable guidance is offered to churches considering the launching of weekday programs for children under six. Is such a school a community need? Can adequate space and materials be provided? Can qualified teachers be secured? Careful reading of this book by church officials and committee members may do much to encourage programs of real value in communities where such schools are needed. This book may also help prevent the organization of programs that are inadequate for children and that foster in the minds of parents misconceptions and limited ideas.

The author writes out of her own rich and satisfying experiences with children in both public and church schools; with parents as they talk with her of their concerns, hopes, and long-

ings; with teachers as she helps them find solutions for their problems. She writes from a background of observations in many churches and church schools. She writes with a deep awareness of the church's responsibility to children. Her great concern is that each church attempt to meet its responsibility to children and the community in the most adequate manner.

As Associate Secretary for several years of the Association for Childhood Education International, the author enjoyed working contacts with many educational leaders in this and other countries. She is familiar with children's needs in many parts of the world. She writes with a full realization of the importance of *all* children and with sincere respect for them.

The book is keyed to the idea that in the kindergarten through daily living and firsthand experiences children gradually develop within themselves the resources, the attitudes, the values, and the types of behavior that contribute to desirable living with one's self and with others. Emphasis is on *educating* the child, not on training him. The reader is reminded that sound education does not come through directed activities and moral admonitions but through day by day responsible living and growing. This viewpoint is supported by examples from the writer's experiences.

Here is a book dedicated to improving opportunities for children through helping churches, parents, and teachers meet more understandingly and adequately their responsibilities for children. It recognizes that the quality of the environment and experiences offered children depends wholly upon the adults who must plan and provide for them.

MARY E. LEEPER  
Executive Secretary Emeritus  
Association for Childhood  
Education International



## *Preface*

No year of teaching, of living with children is just like any other year. There are different children, different parents, some special needs to be met, and new opportunities to challenge. Year by year the teacher grows as she seeks to know more about children and how they learn. It is good to think back over what has happened, to note the learnings that have been helpful, to recall situations that need to be avoided, to ponder on successes and failures and then to plan for the future.

One learns from children, from parents, from other teachers, through one's own experiences, and through study and reading. In this book I am attempting to share with you some of my learnings and experiences through the years. I am grateful to those adults and children who have helped me to grow and learn.

It would be impossible to mention all of these by name. I must mention a few who have given special help in preparing this book. For their reading of the manuscript and for their valuable help, I am grateful to Mary Venable, Mary Leeper, Josephine Newbury, Frances Clark, Mary Ellerbe, Frances Brice, Margaret Macomson, Margaret Stipe, Sarah Lou Hammond, Ruth Flurry, Evelyn Bird, Emily Calhoun, and Rosalie Parris. I appreciate the photography of George Ballentine from whose pictures were captured the ideas for the illustrations used. To Louise Venable I wish to express deep appreciation for her typing of the manuscript.

MAMIE W. HEINZ



# *Contents*

FOREWORD	5
PREFACE	7
I. KINDERGARTEN, A PLACE FOR GROWING AND LEARNING	11
Why Kindergarten?—Reaching Out—Why Play?—Use of Equipment and Materials—Religious Values—Freedom and Responsibility—School Begins—The Child Who Comes—In the Beginning—Equipment Ready for Work and Play—Helping the Child Feel Secure—Resource Books.	
II. UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN	25
Differences—General Characteristics—Basic Needs—How to Understand Children—Understanding the Group—Resource Books.	
III. GROWING RELATIONSHIPS: PARENT—TEACHER—CHILD	38
Parents Are Different—Teachers Are Different—Partnership: a Challenge—Confidential Record—Resource Books.	
IV. CURRICULUM	60
Guides for Planning—How Children Learn—Centers of Interest—Tools for Learning—Sources for Equipment and Information on Materials—Some Experiences in Work and Play—Is Reading Taught in the Kindergarten?—Children and Books—Suggested Program—Not All Days Are Good Ones—Guidance Reminders—Resource Books.	



V. CURRICULUM CONTINUED—SEASONS AND SPECIAL DAYS	93
Planning Related Experiences—Fall—Halloween—Thanksgiving—Christmas—Winter—Valentine's Day—Spring and Easter—Birthdays—The School Year Ends—Summary on Curriculum.	
VI. TOWARD CHRISTIAN LIVING	116
Search for God—How to Help—Worship—Concerns of Christian Education—Need for a Plan—Resource Books.	
VII. THE GROWING TEACHER EVALUATES	130
Measuring Teacher Growth—Why Evaluate?—The Growing Teacher Evaluates Her Work—The Growing Teacher Asks Herself What Is Happening to the Children—The Growing Teacher Evaluates the Program—The Teacher Evaluates the Kindergarten Area—Parents Observe Outcomes and Evaluate—Possibilities for Improvement—Resource Books—Organizations for Membership and Conferences.	
VIII. CHURCH WEEKDAY KINDERGARTEN	144
Trend—Before Starting a Church Kindergarten—Benefits of the Kindergarten—Relation to the Total Program of Education—Standards—Finances—Kindergarten Staff—Responsibilities of Staff Members—Housing—When Is a Church Ready to Start a Weekday Kindergarten?—References.	
INDEX	155

# *Kindergarten, a Place for Growing and Learning*

## *Why Kindergarten?*

Most four- and five-year-olds need experiences outside their homes. Their parents often need help in expanding these experiences. Not all homes can provide enough indoor and outdoor space for the child's full living. Often children are deprived of real life activities involving creative thinking. They spend too much time in being entertained, in having things done *for* them.

Children of four and five need to be with others of their own ages. When they have this association in a challenging environment and are guided by a well-qualified teacher, they grow in their ability to observe, to share, to express themselves through many media. When the child is offered such opportunities in a good kindergarten under wise leadership, the parents also benefit. They meet other parents who have similar happy times with their children and some of the same problems. They have the counsel of the teacher to call upon when needed. The short time of separation of the child and parents brings new insights and interests and enhances familiar ones. The child of kindergarten age is beginning to look outside his home into his immediate community. Through school activities he is introduced into some of the privileges of the community and begins to see himself related to these, even though it may be in a very small way.

## *Reaching Out*

"School, here I come," exclaimed Bill as he arrived at kindergarten the first day. He was thrilled over the new adventure. And right he should be! He was stepping out into a new, bigger world for him.

This four- or five-year-old is really seeking new adventures. He is wanting companionship with others of four and five. He has reached the stage of growth when he needs group experiences. Anxious to fly the home coop for a while, he wants to be assured that he will return to his family. Willingness of the parents to let him have these explorations away from home will help him to make the new adjustments. Their interest in his new experiences and his new friends will make life happier for him and will also strengthen his feelings toward his parents and toward home.

"What will he learn at kindergarten?" "Why is school important for a four- or five-year-old?" It is easy to see the need later of his learning the tool subjects—reading, writing, numbers. "But what kind of curriculum does the kindergarten provide?" These are important questions. If the child is asked, "What did you learn today?", he can't tell, for he really doesn't know. However, he can tell what he did today. Much of his learning is involved with forming habits, building attitudes, learning to get along with others, understanding himself better, all of which are important at this time.

## *Why Play?*

Much of the day's activities includes play. Play is not thought of as a pass-the-time occupation. Play is very important to young children, for through it they learn many of the most valuable lessons. Through play they orientate themselves into life about them. They try out their thoughts and feelings. In re-living experiences in play, meanings are enriched and thinking is clarified. Children play out home activities, trips they take, occupa-



tions they observe, such as those of groceryman, milkman, traffic policeman, minister, fireman.

A group of children visited the church sanctuary, went into the organ loft, listened to the organist play and watched her manipulate the organ. Some days later four boys built a church by outlining a large rug with big hollow blocks and filling the space with rows of chairs. They used blocks to make an organ and a pulpit. For the congregation they gathered all the dolls and wooden people. Then the question arose as to which one would be the minister. Each boy wanted the job. After some moments of arguing, Chip said, "When Eisenhower wanted to be president, he had to run." The four boys lined up on one side of the room and raced to the other side, then called out, "Vote!" The winner took over as minister without further discussion. Their imagination filled in the gaps of actual experience as the church service progressed.

No adult had suggested this dramatic play. These children felt free to play out their ideas about the church and the activities there. One of the values of this particular play came through the experience of the children in settling their own difficulties to the satisfaction of each individual involved.

Play also offers the child the opportunity to get rid of pent-up emotions. One morning at home Mary refused to get dressed. She had waked up in a difficult mood. Hitting her baby sister finally brought a scolding from her mother. As Mary left for school with a frown on her face, she still felt angry with her mother and unhappy within herself. In doll play that day she was severe with her baby, spanked her, and bossed other children around. Soon tensions were lessened and Mary began to get back her sense of all-rightness. As her feelings were relieved, Mary became her usual self.

Children's play helps the teacher, too. It gives clues to the curriculum needs. By watching children play, the teacher discovers many of their inaccurate concepts. Play helps her to evaluate their past experiences. She sees what new experiences are needed. A trip to the farm, to the fire engine house, or even

a walk around the block is planned not only for pleasure but also to clarify and expand ideas and meanings.

Play gives children a chance to feel important, a feeling each individual needs at times. Feelings of satisfaction and success are necessary in the growing-up process. As children play in kindergarten, there should be an understanding adult at hand. Children are learning to get along with others. Many times a child needs help in finding ways by which he can play happily with another child or in a small group. The wise teacher knows when to step into a child's play and when to step out. Joan and Charles were in the housekeeping center. Mary, a shy child, had gone to the dress-up box, had put on a hat and was carrying a pocket-book. She approached the housekeeping center but was rudely pushed away. "No, you can't play here." The teacher said to Mary, "Are you going visiting? Here are some flowers you can take along. Let's call your friends to see if they are at home." Pretending to call over the telephone, the teacher said, "I called to see if you are at home. Mrs. Jones is coming over. She has flowers for you." This time "Mrs. Jones" was well received, and satisfying play followed. The teacher helped shy Mary to get into the play and also helped Joan and Charles to accept another child.

As the teacher learns more of how and what to observe in play, she will sense when to be still and listen and when to participate. It is important for her to recognize play as a basic necessity to the child's living and learning. She needs to be in tune with the spirit of play. The atmosphere conducive to satisfying play is one of friendliness and understanding. The teacher may provide this environment as well as equipment, materials, and adequate space, but she will miss the true meaning of the child's play unless she knows how to observe it and develops ability to interpret this observation in terms of learning and need.

### *Use of Equipment and Materials*

Housekeeping materials, big blocks, trucks, dress-up clothes, and the like are essential for imaginative play. The greatest joy

of the child comes from getting things ready, from manipulating things. Often when he gets something built he does not know what to do with it. A group of four-year-olds had built a boat of big blocks. After the boat was completed to their satisfaction, they didn't know how to use it, so scuffling began. The teacher appeared with big paintbrushes and buckets. Right away the play took form again. The children became very busy painting their boat, even though actual paint was not used. Without a verbal suggestion from the teacher, purposeful activity resulted.

Children learn many things as they play. They solve problems by themselves or sometimes because of a helpful suggestion or question of the teacher. One group delighted in constructive play with traffic signs similar to those used on streets and highways. When men were repairing a cement walk in the school play yard, children on tricycles interfered with their work. Some boys solved this problem by placing a "stop" sign in a strategic place. Another time, it was necessary to have one-way traffic, since many children were using wheel toys. Using the "one-way" sign was suggested by the teacher. Chris exclaimed, "We can't read." "Yes," said Billy, "but we can use an arrow. We can tell which way the arrow points."

A good kindergarten provides a rich environment where interesting and challenging living can take place. Equipment and materials seem to say, "Come, use me."

Children learn through experimenting with art materials. These materials include tempera paints to use on easels or on large sheets of paper on the floor; finger paints (made with a starch base and tempera paints), through which children get a different experience; crayons, scissors, paste, cloth. Children are free to experiment with these, to feel the joy in manipulating them, as when John called out, "See the blue come!" His eyes sparkled as he watched the paint flow from his brush. What mattered that the final product revealed no discernible picture? The finished product is not as important as what happens within the child while he is working. "What are you making?" is not a good question to ask. When Jim was asked this, he replied, "I

don't know. I haven't finished yet." If the child has ideas he feels he is expressing, he will wonder why the adult cannot interpret them. An interested attitude, remarks such as, "Those are good strong colors you are using," or "Be sure to let me see it when you have finished," encourage children. The child usually reveals his thinking without urging to an understanding person. No attempt is made to see that everyone finishes something to take home each day, for creativity does not thrive on demand or under pressure. The teacher does not "touch up" what the child draws. She must respect his workmanship, for he alone knows what he wants to make. His joy and his growth come from his own creation and how he feels about it. Many parents need help in knowing how to accept the child's work, in respecting his efforts, and in not expecting some finished work brought home each day.

The child learns about his world through observation, experimentation, and exploration; so in kindergarten the child and the teacher explore the world about them. Children in a kindergarten located near a busy street had many opportunities for observing community helpers. From their playground one day they watched men using power drills to loosen concrete where water sewers were to be placed. Another time, a five-year-old was entranced by a group of men taking down a telephone pole. He was heard to remark, "Telephone business sure is interesting. I think I'll join it." Watching men check the fireplug, release water from it, brought questions and discoveries. The policeman directing traffic was another source of interest. Discovering a ticket being given to one violating traffic rules encouraged discussion of safety and the need for obedience to rules.

Together the child and the teacher enjoy science. They watch the turtle brought to school by the teacher or a parent, feel his hard back, wonder about the darkness inside as he pulls his head into his shell. They feel the bulbs, plant some in water in order to see the roots grow. Others they plant in the earth and learn something of patient waiting. They cut an apple across the center, discover the outline of the blossom, and find that the



seeds make a star. Such experiences leave no time in kindergarten for coloring within lines, using patterns, or following directions for work given by the teacher.

Questioning is encouraged. The child is helped to find his own answers whenever possible. Together he and the teacher go to books, sometimes finding answers through pictures or from the adult's reading aloud. The kindergarten child is encouraged to use books, to love them, to know how to care for them. He is getting clearer understanding of words. His vocabulary is growing. Workbooks should never be used in kindergarten, nor devices for so-called "teaching readiness." The child needs time, materials, freedom, and the feeling of well-being if he is to develop as he should. He cannot be hurried and pushed along this road of learning. Most children love stories. As the child listens to many of them his interests broaden. He learns to tell many of his favorites, even makes up stories, rhymes, and songs. He is learning to express his ideas better, to convey his thoughts to others. As he listens and talks, he is growing in his ability to speak distinctly so that he can be understood. He gains skill in planning his work and in carrying out his plans.

Children love music. They are encouraged to experiment with sound, not merely to pound out a rhythmic beat in directed groups, but to be aware of various sounds, the meanings and feelings they produce. Children express themselves, their feelings, with body rhythm. Gaining control of movement seems to help in total development.

### *Religious Values*

The church weekday kindergarten provides for children many opportunities to learn of God and to have satisfying relationships with Him. Christian living is not achieved from hearing a Bible story, reciting Bible "memory verses," saying a prayer in perfunctory "opening exercises"; it comes through vital experiences with God. Children and teachers can grow in appreciation

of God's creations, of His love and care. Together they can discover and practice Christian ways of living.

Just coming to the church each day can mean something to the child. Teachers need to grasp every opportunity for meaningful experiences within the church. Children get to know the minister and other staff members through many happy associations with them. Trips into the church sanctuary, looking at the windows as the bright or subdued light comes through, listening to organ music in companionship with an understanding Christian teacher, often deepen within a child the awareness of God and His love. In addition to experiences in which specific religious interpretations can be made, the other experiences in the kindergarten can contribute to Christian living. This is true because the teacher's faith in God, her feelings and approach toward people and life, influence the meanings which children get from the total program.

### *Freedom and Responsibility*

Within the kindergarten there is freedom, but freedom within limits. The children learn that freedom brings responsibility. Equipment and materials must be used in right ways. There is a place for everything. When one gets through using a toy or a piece of equipment, one must put it back where it belongs. Children learn to respect the rights of others. They learn to share materials, to work without disturbing others. Perhaps one of the hardest lessons to learn is to share the attention of the teacher. Children are encouraged to do things for themselves whenever possible. In order to work well together, each one must do his part. It is found that children who have good learning experiences in kindergarten are more ready later for learning the skill subjects such as reading, writing, numbers. When this learning of skills is not pushed, when each child is allowed to develop at his own rate of growth, he gets the foundation needed and is able later to adjust to a more formal program as he progresses through school.

The kindergarten year can help a child grow and learn through providing satisfying experiences of adventure, exploration, and experimentation.

### *School Begins*

The first weeks of school are very important. Some children will come with great anticipation and enthusiasm. Some will come with anxiety. Others will be rather placid as they set out for school, not knowing what to expect but ready to take things in their stride. A few will have great difficulty in making the separation from home and family even for a short time. The tone set these first days will help all to get off to a good start or will build up barriers to the learning process.

### *The Child Who Comes*

How the family has prepared the child for school will make a difference. Are the parents wanting their four- or five-year-old to be independent, to grow as an individual, or are they reluctant to have their child leave babyhood? Have they helped him these years before his school adventure to do things for himself, to play with others, to want to stretch his wings? Are they willing to permit him to be responsible for himself so far as he is able, or do they leave him at the classroom door with the command, "Be good today and do what the teacher tells you"? Have older brothers and sisters talked happily of their school experiences or have they told tales of what "will happen to you when you get to school"? All these factors influence the attitude of the child as he enters kindergarten.

How will the teacher take hold, meet the needs of each child in the group? She must see each child as an individual, be ready to accept him as he is. She should have had a pleasant association with each one before he comes, either through the child's earlier visit to the kindergarten, a visit to the home, or some other

personal contact. She needs to be able to call each child by name. Being called by name gives the child a sense of importance and helps him to feel he is known as a person. The teacher of a large group may need to use name tags at first.

### *In the Beginning*

These first days are very important ones. The child needs time to investigate the classroom, handle the toys and materials. If it is possible to have children come in small groups, the teacher will have the opportunity to watch each child's choices. The wise teacher will be careful in selecting the kind and amount of equipment to put out in the beginning. Too many things will confuse the child. It is difficult to get a large quantity of equipment put away. It is well to make available at first those materials that require least restriction in their use. The total environment of the room will have an effect on the child. A few well-chosen and artistically mounted pictures, displayed on bulletin board or picture rack on the child's eye level, will likely catch some child's interest. Space around each picture will help the child to concentrate his attention on one at a time. These pictures may be the means of establishing good relations between teacher and child and among children who are interested in the pictures.

Since kindergarten is the first school experience for many children, it requires a big adjustment. There will of necessity be more routines to learn, more organized living, and less personal freedom even in an informal kindergarten program. The three-hour school day at first is tiring. If it is possible, it is well to start the year with a shorter day. As the child's span of attention increases in activities of his own choosing and in group activities, the day does not seem so long. A two-hour daily session for the first two weeks helps the child to adjust to school routines better. Instead of asking, "When is it time to go home?" he will soon be saying, "Why do we have to go home?" The latter question indicates that he is ready for the three-hour day.



## *Equipment Ready for Work and Play*

Equipment and materials must be in order before school begins. If these were sorted and put away carefully at the end of the previous school year, the task will not be a big one. Even so, there will be repair and paint jobs to be done and a list made of new equipment needed. Keeping equipment and materials in order is important. Blocks, housekeeping equipment, dolls, trucks, books, paints, paper, scissors, clay, are tools for learning and should always be kept ready for satisfactory use.

Are the storage shelves strategically placed? The shelves for blocks, trucks, and other equipment that go with block play need to be in the part of the room that provides space for block building. The bookshelves and library table should be in a spot away from traffic and noisiest play. There must be easy access to the housekeeping center. The easels for painting and the tables for using crayons and other art material need to be where there is good light, where the builders will not bump into them. The room is a workshop, but a neat one, with provision for proper storage of equipment. The materials should be placed where children can get what they want and can put them away when they are through with them. Children need to feel responsible for helping to keep equipment and materials in their proper places. This is an important part of their learning, and ample time for this should be provided.

In the beginning the children will likely use many different kinds of media in one day. They want time for trying things out, for learning to know each other as well as to know the teacher and what she expects of them. It is wise to use only three colors of paint—red, yellow, blue—on the easels in the beginning. Later others will be added as the children discover them through mixing primary colors and as they feel a need for a greater variety. When it is time to put things away, the teacher needs to work with the children at first. This clean-up job may take time and patience, but may also be fun and give a sense of satisfaction. It will pay to go slowly at first. Help the children to learn how

to carry blocks, to stack them, how to clean paintbrushes, where to put each piece of material. Enough time in the beginning must be allowed for this period. When good habits are established, the cleaning-up will move more rapidly. For the first few weeks and occasionally during the year, the teacher should comment on the neatness of the room, how straight the blocks are stacked, how clean the paint area is, and the like.

The child will like having a place to keep his own things. Lockers for each one should be marked with a picture identification as well as the child's name. Some children may need to be shown their lockers several times before they recognize them. An extra suit of clothing and a pair of socks for each child are needed for an emergency.

It is good that at first the children will not have wraps. However, when the first rainy days or the first cool days come, much time and attention must be given to helping children learn how to care for their wraps. Every piece of wearing apparel should be clearly marked with the child's name. Unless each locker is large enough to hold a child's wraps, hooks or a clothes bar should be provided near the door. A coat hanger for each child and a snap clothespin to hold together a pair of boots or rubbers encourage good housekeeping habits as well as independence in keeping up with belongings.

A committee of mothers in the morning and again at dismissal time can help until children learn to take care of wraps themselves. These mothers should know just what the teacher is trying to help the children learn. It is important that adults not do for children those things which they can do for themselves, but rather encourage them to be independent.

### *Helping the Child Feel Secure*

There will probably be an opportunity to read some books to small groups of children during the free activity time. It is well to have a few desirable short stories ready to tell. Telling a story brings the child and teacher close together. One of the

stories might be made up about the children themselves and include what they have been doing that day. Young children like stories about themselves.

A special effort should be made, particularly at the first of the year, to have mothers come for the children on time. Until the child feels secure with his teacher, he should not have to wait for his mother after others of the group have gone. Parents should see the importance of being on time in coming for the children, not for the teacher's convenience, but for the comfort of the child. This can be explained at the parents' meeting held before school begins.

During these early days of school, it is well to stay close to the kindergarten room. Taking the child away from the place where his mother has left him might frighten him if he has not yet learned to trust his teacher. Trips to other parts of the building and out of doors, unless the playground is close to the room, will come when the child feels secure with the teaching staff.

It is hoped that these beginning days will be such satisfying ones that each child will think of school as a pleasant place where there are interesting things to do and learn, where the teacher is a friend who can be depended upon for understanding help, where he is known as an individual, and where he can live comfortably and happily with others.

## RESOURCE BOOKS

*Teachers Guide to Education in Early Childhood*, Chapter I. Compiled by Bureau of Elementary Education, California State Department of Education, Sacramento, California, 1956.

*Living in the Kindergarten*, Chapter IV, Clarice D. Wills and William H. Stegeman. Chicago: Follett Publishing Co., 1951, revised 1956.

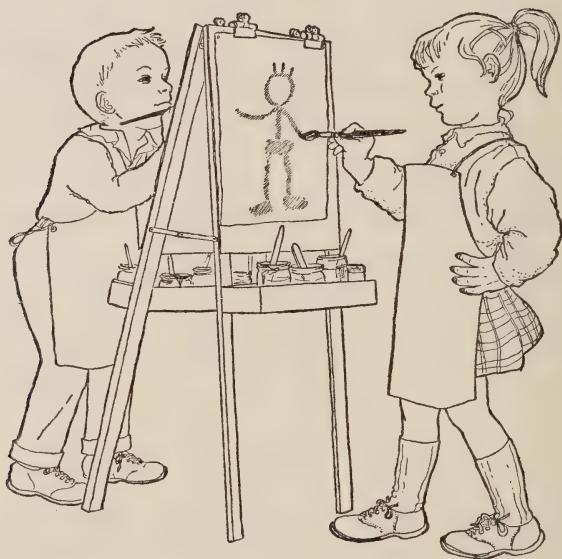
## PAMPHLETS

"Do You Work With Children Under Six?" Published by Kentucky Division of American Association of University Women, Lexington, Ky., 1955.

"Schools for Young Children." Publication No. 305. Issued by Superintendent of Public Instruction, Raleigh, N. C., 1955.

"Happy Journey—Preparing Your Child for School." National Education Association and National Congress of Parents and Teachers, N.E.A., 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D. C., 1953.

"Planning for America's Children—Education for Children Below Six." Prepared by National Council of State Consultants in Elementary Education in co-operation with The Elementary Schools Section, Office of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington, D. C., 1955. Can be ordered from Boston House, 1711 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D. C.





# *Understanding Children*

## *Differences*

Observation of a group of kindergarten children will soon reveal many differences. The most obvious of these will be in relation to physical appearance and health. Johnny is very small for a five-year-old. He will never go near the "How Tall" chart. He avoids any mention of height. Too many adults keep reminding him of his size. Johnny's desire to show power and strength is expressed through irritating others, always wanting to be first, by knowing all the answers. On the other hand, Bruce reacts to his feelings about being small by avoiding other children, doing things alone, often staying close to the teacher. Jan is the type that has attracted attention from babyhood. She has an attractive face, big brown eyes, curly hair. She is very conscious of looks and clothes and counts on these to win attention.

Tim has to use heavy glasses because of defective eyesight. The big corrective shoes which he has to wear make him awkward in his movements. For a long time children constantly picked on him and irritated him. Never did he seem to start trouble, but wherever he played or worked, dissatisfaction usually developed. One day in the housekeeping center, wallpaper cleaner was being used for dough. Jerry, Bob, Louise, and June were making "cookies" when Tim joined the group. He put on an apron and went to work. Soon he was making "hamburgers." Such remarks were heard as, "Tim, you make the best hamburgers!" "Tim, make me a hamburger." For once Tim was in. From then on for the most part the children's attitude toward

him changed. Being successful as a hamburger cook was the turning point. Feeling important in one line seemed to open the door to other satisfying adventures with children, minimizing the effects of his physical disabilities.

Ruth is frail, takes cold easily, has to be away from school often. Just as she begins to take school routines in her stride, she misses enough time to offset progress.

Joe sits up too late at night, never wants to get up in the morning. He is often tired and listless, not quite ready to enter into the day's activities. Gordon has boundless energy, always eager to be on the move.

How the child feels about things and people, how he participates in all the activities, depends a great deal on his own physical condition. The more we associate with children, the more we see the importance of knowing all we can about the health of each child and the effect it has on his total development.

As one becomes more familiar with the individuals in the group, one recognizes many other differences. Although the children are chronologically four or five years old, there are wide differences in mental ages. Each child has his own rate of growing and his rate may be quite different from that of another child of the same chronological age.

Each child comes with his own family background. Economic conditions in the home, his position in the family—whether he is an only child, the oldest, the youngest, the in-between—are factors which affect the child's development. The outlook and beliefs of his parents influence his life. It makes a difference whether they love each other or have serious marital difficulties. Parental accord helps build emotional stability within the family. The child is what he is partly because of the people he lives with and because of the way they all live together. His relationship with his parents and with others in the family influences his thoughts and feelings. In order to guide these children effectively the teacher needs to know more of each one than she can observe as she lives with them in the classroom. She must know something of the family and of the background of their living.

Carol's father died when she was four. When Bill tried to enter the housekeeping play at kindergarten, Carol, then a five-year-old, rejected him, saying, "We don't have a daddy at our house." Yet when there was a daddy visitor in the kindergarten, Carol came close to him and at storytime snuggled up into his lap.

Jean's parents were divorced. Jean lived with her mother and her maternal grandmother. Every week end was spent with her father and his mother, who made this time a special holiday. Mondays were always hard days for Jean as she settled back into a part-time routine. Jean was jealous of any man who noticed her mother. She called out in her rest one day at kindergarten, "No, Mother, please don't go out with Dick." This remark might have indicated that Jean had a fear of another change in her home life and could never quite get away from a feeling of insecurity. It was hard for her to concentrate long on any activity. She seemed always to be searching for something, yet never seemed satisfied.

Jennie is a happy person and brings contentedness into any group. She comes from a home where the family does many things together, where children are loved and accepted as they are, where not too much is expected of them. Jennie takes successes and difficulties in her stride.

The child's spiritual development is influenced by the belief of his parents and the way their belief influences their daily lives. His early concepts of God are formed in the family environment. If the parents are Christian, take advantage of opportunities for worship and prayer, reflect their belief in God's love and care through their own lives, the child responds to religious experiences in positive ways. Barriers have already been set up in the child's growth toward God if beliefs of the parents are confused, if love, faith, and trust are not practiced at home. Sutton and Don had different feelings toward God. When the song, "A Little Star Creeps Over the Hill," was sung by a group, Sutton remarked, "That is my favorite where it says, 'And the love of God is everywhere.'" During a severe drought, Don ran into the

house when a few drops of rain fell and exclaimed, "God sent a messenger just now and said He would send us some rain if we would just be good." Unfortunately "being good" had been impressed upon Don even to the bargaining point. The teacher needs to know the religious backgrounds of her group if she hopes to guide them in satisfying religious experiences.

Sex and race, emotional maturity, interests and abilities, personality traits, are among other differences that affect the growing and learning of children. Children within the same family are different. Each child is an individual and must be guided as an individual. Each has potentialities, each his limitations. Understanding helps us to respect each child as a person, accept him as he is, and help him at his own growing point.

### *General Characteristics*

Although there are differences among children, there are also general characteristics and needs at various stages of growth. Knowledge of these will influence the teacher's planning for and guidance of children. Normal children want to grow up, to do things for themselves. They are primarily doers. They want to have close supervision by an understanding adult who is a friend, who gives appreciation and help when needed.

"Come see," called Sandy. "Today there are no drips on my paper." The teacher rejoices with Sandy that he is learning to manage paints without having "drips."

"We have a one-way road over a bridge and we can't get through. Other children keep starting their trucks up the wrong way." Tom and Bill brought this problem to the teacher. "How can I help you?" she asked. "Would a sign saying 'one way' help?" Tom and Bill thought it would, but decided they needed a sign at each end of the road. The signs were made and put up. Traffic proceeded nicely. A wise teacher supplies just enough assistance to help the child to continue to grow in ability to think and plan for himself.

Hannah came to school with a reputation for scratching,



fighting, and being disagreeable in all her play activities. The children were very critical and were continually telling the bad things Hannah did, while she stood with a scowl on her face. When working independently, Hannah did acceptable work. Miss Rose, the teacher, recognized the need for Hannah to be appreciated and she grasped every opportunity to direct attention to her worth-while efforts. Encouraged to appreciate Hannah's work, the children became less critical of Hannah herself. Hannah's joy in being accepted changed her scowl in time to a pleasant expression. Children are alike in their need for acceptance and appreciation.

Children are active, interested in many things, curious, questioning. Their interests center around the "here and now." They like to explore, to investigate, to see how things work. They need many opportunities to make discoveries. "Look!" exclaimed Marion. "I put yellow on my paper, then I put blue on it. Now I have green." Such a discovery increases interest in colors and leads to further experimentation.

Children like to talk about themselves, tell what they do and hear and see. It is important for the teacher to be interested, to take time to listen. If the teacher is responsible for too many children, she cannot listen as she should. "Miss Ivey will like to know you dried the silver for me tonight," said Susie's mother. "Oh, no," replied Susie. "She's too busy with the kids." Being "too busy" can block many happy and important relations.

While they are much concerned with themselves, the four- and five-year-olds are showing increasing interest in others. They are beginning for brief periods to want to be participating members of a group. They try out a variety of approaches to each other. Peter attracts a friend by making faces. Jennie smiles and gets into a group. Pat taps Joe on the head and play together begins.

These children are improving in motor control, especially of the big muscles. During the years of four and five they usually become interested in learning to skip. "See me skip," calls Harry as he awkwardly hops on one foot, then on the other. And "skip"

he does whenever he can, indoors and out. With much practice, which he voluntarily imposes upon himself, the awkwardness disappears, and Harry expresses in this activity a new sense of achievement. Children feel great success in getting body balance, a release in free, swinging motion. However, some children may not develop this skill until after the kindergarten year. Most five-year-olds can climb, run with freedom, hop. There is growth in co-ordination of the big muscles. Small muscles are not well enough developed for them to manipulate pencils, small paintbrushes, and do close work. They need large paintbrushes, large crayons, large sheets of paper.

They grow in expressing themselves creatively in many ways—through art, music, rhythm, stories, language, use of blocks, dramatic play. Their work is often crude, but usually there is purpose in it. The interest span is short. Often a project of his own choosing will hold a child for a longer time than when an adult directs the activity. It is hard for the child to wait for turns or for the next activity. Waiting with nothing to do encourages poking, punching. The teacher plans the program so that there are as few waits as possible, such as at toilet time, going to the playground, using the equipment. The child begins to co-operate more with other children, some of the time at least. There is often a big growth of interest in group activity in the fifth year. The child is becoming more sociable. He wants to get along with people, but he doesn't always know how. He experiments with social living in many ways. He needs times of feeling important and times of being one of the group. He is sometimes boastful and bossy. At the lunch table in kindergarten the simple remark, "My father has a horse," brought forth, "My father has three horses." "My father has a hundred horses." "My father has all the horses in the world." The last statement ended the subject. The teacher listening showed her interest but made no comment. She knew imagination and exaggeration often run wild and meet a need at this stage of development.

Most children like sound—sound of words, musical sounds, sounds of nature, transportation sounds. They imitate these

when painting, drawing, working with clay, talking. They begin to notice similar sounds as in ring, bring, sing. "Your name sounds like mine." This leads often to making up words, going into nonsense jingles. Many children delight in humor, some of which has little meaning to many adults.

Robert and John had fun with words on a walk with the kindergarten group. They started with a question addressed to Miss Sims, the teacher. "Can we lead the children as we walk today?" "Not today," replied Miss Sims. "Maybe some other day." Walking along together, Robert and John, not conscious of anyone listening, began to play with words: "We'll lead them to Florida." "We'll lead them to big Texas." Then each contributed a line:

"We went to Mars to get some candy bars."

"We went to the sky to get some by."

"We went to the church to get some perch."

"We went to Mr. Brick to get some rick."

"We went to Mr. Skeeters to get some beeters."

"We went to Mr. Butterfly to get some hutterfly."

On they jabbered all the way around the block, laughing after each statement.

### *Basic Needs*

All children have certain basic needs:

*Health.* Each child needs proper food, sleep, balance of activity and rest, and good health habits. Poor health retards a child's growth and slows down his reaction to experiences.

*Security.* From early infancy the child needs to feel he is loved and accepted. When this feeling of security is established in the home during the first few years of life, the child is better able later to feel comfortable in a group. The teacher tries to establish with the child those relationships that help him to feel wanted, accepted at school. She tries to help children accept each other in their daily living together.

*Respect for self.* Discovering oneself as a person comes within the first few years of life. The child in these early stages of development needs to feel he is important to someone, to be sure he has a special place in the life about him. Being respected as a person assists him in gaining respect for himself. This feeling of importance as a self, this respect for self, must develop before anyone begins to respect others as persons.

*Sense of adequacy.* The child needs to experience many successes, to get satisfaction from work done. Walter, after putting up blocks, stood off, observed the results of his efforts, and said to himself, "Doesn't that look good?" The child also needs to know that others recognize his efforts. We must be careful not to expect too much from the child, but to see the work from his standpoint. Appreciation of his own creative work can lead to appreciation of the work of others, to respect for differences in work and thinking. A sense of achievement fosters wholesome emotional development.

*Affection and friendship.* Children must first experience friendship before they are ready to give it to others. Knowing he is loved adds to the child's sense of security, of being needed and wanted. This child more readily becomes friendly with others.

*Faith and wonder.* These are among important foundations for the child's religious development. Faith and trust are first learned through the adults close to the child. Wonder can lead to knowing God. This is the beginning of worship.

*Respect for authority.* This can come through the right kind of discipline based on an understanding of the child. Each child needs to have established limits which he learns to understand and respect. We strive to help him develop inner control, to limit his activities when his own good and the needs and rights of others are involved.

*Freedom.* In order to make choices, to learn to make decisions, to accept responsibilities, children need freedom, but freedom within limitations. "Blocks are to use in building, not to throw." "Books are to be used carefully, not to be torn or left on the



floor." "We walk in the halls but we can run on the playground." As the child learns to use freedom with responsibility, he can help to set his own limits.

*Challenge.* The child needs a rich environment that gives opportunities for broad and deep experiences. Here he can solve simple problems, make some decisions. He is encouraged to think for himself, plan, evaluate. For this he needs many types of material and equipment. This kind of challenge does not involve competition between children, but helps each to mature at his own rate of growth.

*Fun.* Children thrive in an atmosphere in which they can play freely and joyously without physical strains and emotional tensions. Adults need to understand children's special kind of fun, to laugh with them, never at them. Making faces at himself in the mirror fascinates Sam. "See you later, alligator," set off peals of laughter in one group.

## *How to Understand Children*

If the teacher is to guide the changes that take place in each individual, she needs to know that individual as a person. She will come to know this person through many ways, each contributing something to the total picture. She can learn to know children:

*Through listening to them as they work and play.* Ralph said, "If I take my paper home, I'll throw it away." "Why do you do that?" asked the teacher. "It's just no use. It's just no use." Ralph's mother never thinks his scribbling amounts to anything. When Don's mother came home from the hospital with a new baby, Don spent a while each day in the housekeeping center, feeding the baby, putting it to bed, then off he'd go to build with blocks. Don felt the need of playing out this new experience, and the teacher could understand his need. Children tell us many things through their actions, things that trouble them, things that make them happy. They show in their play their interpretations of life about them. When they feel comfortable

with an adult, feel friendly interest and understanding, they reveal much more than they themselves know they are revealing. The adult needs to grow in sensitivity to each child.

*Through observing their behavior.* Behavior is the language that tells how the child feels. The one starved for attention may present difficulties when he wants to talk incessantly, is always anxious to do errands. Perhaps he is telling his needs. The too quiet child speaks to us, too. He does not demand attention, with the result that he is frequently neglected.

*Through observing them as they work creatively.* In their creative activities children frequently reveal what they think, what ideas need clarifying, what feelings need to come out.

*Through visiting in the home.* The home environment is the greatest influence in the child's reaction to life. The teacher must know what she can of his home life.

*Through watching many children.* As we watch many children—on the playground, on buses, in restaurants, and in parks—we become more conscious of their likenesses and their differences.

*By being friends with many children.* One earns friendship through being an understanding friend.

*Through study of health records.* Discussion of these can be included in the conferences with individual parents.

*Through keeping and studying anecdotal records of what children say and do.* We need to be careful about jumping to conclusions. Labeling a child, even in our minds, as good, bad, unkind, indifferent, gifted, slow, and the like, blocks rather than helps efforts to meet his needs. It takes much observation and careful analysis to give us answers. The wise teacher many times is in a state of perplexity, but as she patiently lives with the child, trying to meet his needs, she understands him more and more and is better able to help him solve his problems and enjoy his living. Keeping a record of what a child does and says will help her to better understand him.

*Through reading books,* research studies, articles on child de-

velopment, stories about children, such as *Heaven in My Hand*,<sup>1</sup> *Our Miss Boo*,<sup>2</sup> *Room for One More*.<sup>3</sup>

*By studying pictures of children.* Photographs, pictures of children doing things, drawings by artists who are sensitive to children, all help us to enjoy and know children.

### *Understanding the Group*

The four- or five-year-old is growing socially. He can usually play very well with a few children, not just alongside of them as he did a year ago. He is wanting to call children by name, is becoming more interested in group activities for short spaces of time. Individual needs and wants come out in the group. The teacher must know something of how children work in groups. Group relationships may change from time to time. The teacher as a member of the group contributes to the group activity as do the children. She watches the interaction of the individuals. Who helps in group work? Who has difficulties in group participation? Who disturbs the group? These are important to her.

How does the individual act when alone, when with a few, when in the total group? The teacher helped individuals work in small groups when she provided Bill with a wagon to carry blocks to Don, when she asked Joan to help Mary put away the dishes. She seeks opportunities to have small groups working together, varying the composition of the groups. She tries to see that each child has opportunities of being a leader at times and a follower at other times. She provides a variety of activities to get wider group participation, as in the picnic experience. Plans for a simple picnic had been made. Children chose the special work they would like to do. One group prepared the lemonade. Another made cookies. Another had the responsibility of packing the picnic basket. One group chose the games to be played and were

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1. *Heaven in My Hand*, Alice Lee Humphreys. John Knox Press, 1950.

2. *Our Miss Boo*, Margaret Lee Runbeck. Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1942.

3. *Room for One More*, Anna Perrott Rose. Houghton Mifflin Co., 1950.

responsible for the needed equipment. The work done in small groups contributed to the activity as a whole.

In order to work well together, children need to know each other by name. Early in the year the teacher introduces games that help in learning the names. One such game is "Roll the Ball." Children are seated on the floor in a circle. One person in the center of the circle says, "I roll the ball to \_\_\_\_\_ (calling a child by name). \_\_\_\_\_ rolls it back to me." In another game, one child leaves the group, while others keep eyes closed. When eyes are opened, children guess who left the group.

Singing together, enjoying rhythmic motions to music, saying rhymes, help to build group solidarity. As children work together, group responsibilities begin to develop. The group helps to formulate rules, beginning early in the school year. By her voice, her friendliness, her consideration and courtesy to each one, the teacher sets the tone for working together.

Dramatic play is a helpful means of fostering many characteristics needed in group living. "We need passengers for our boat," Jim called out when a boat was finished. A daddy is wanted in the house center. Many children are involved in hospital play. "Dinner is ready," called Carolyn to the boy building with blocks. "It's time to stop work and eat dinner."

Successful group participation, as well as individual growth, comes about through a long, slow, patient process. Often progress seems blocked, then again children work well together. At this stage mere beginnings of group participation are being made. Understanding of people as individuals and persons as they work together helps the teacher to see and meet the many needs of children.

### RESOURCE BOOKS

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*Behavior and Misbehavior*, James L. Hymes, Jr. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1955.



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- The Children We Teach*, Chapters I-V, Elizabeth Whitehouse. Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1950.
- These Are Your Children*, Chapters V, XIII, Gladys G. Jenkins, Helen Shacter, William W. Bauer. Chicago: Scott, Foresman & Co., 1953, 1954. (Expanded Edition.)
- Understanding Children*, Lewis J. Sherrill. Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1939.
- Understanding Your Child*, James L. Hymes, Jr. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1952.

## PAMPHLETS

- "Some Special Problems of Children—Aged 2 to 5 Years." The National Association for Mental Health, Inc., 1790 Broadway, New York, N. Y., 1947.
- "The Children We Teach," Nina Ridenour. National Association for Mental Health, Inc., 1790 Broadway, New York, N. Y., 1957.
- "The Shy Child," Helen Ross. Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 239. Public Affairs Committee, 22 E. 38th St., New York, 1956.
- "Your Child from One to Six." Children's Bureau Publication No. 30, revised 1956. U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington, D. C.
- "Understanding Children's Behavior," Fritz Redl. Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1949.
- "Understanding Young Children," Dorothy Baruch. Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1950.

## *Growing Relationships: Parent-Teacher-Child*

Parents and teachers have much in common. A child is the bond. Parents want the best in education for their children. So do teachers. To help make school experiences vital for the child, parents should know the teacher as a person and as a teacher. They need to know what their children are doing in school and what they can do to help. For the teacher to understand the child and to best serve his needs, she must know his parents as persons and as parents.

### *Parents Are Different*

Mrs. Lane brought Bill to school the first day. After greeting the teacher and looking at the equipment with Bill, she said to Bill, "I am sure you will have a happy time here. I'll be back for you later. Good-by." "Good-by," said Bill as he went to play. As Mrs. Lane left, she said to the teacher, "Bill, his Daddy, and I have been talking about kindergarten. Bill is glad to come. He has learned to do many things for himself, to enjoy being with other children, and to try out new experiences. I believe he is ready for school."

Dan is the youngest in his family, his only brother being of college age. Dan's parents were not very happy when they knew a baby was to come into the home after they had thought their family was completed. However, after Dan arrived, they enjoyed

having him as a baby. When Dan entered kindergarten, he could not dress or undress himself, had never gone to the toilet without being helped. His dependence upon his parents pleased rather than disturbed them until Dan began school.

Jack's parents have encouraged him to spend much time in the big playground in an apartment house development. They want him out of their small apartment, for Jack is too active for their comfort in close quarters. Besides, he constantly disturbs the baby of six months. They say they want Jack to be independent, to learn to take up for himself. Jack not only has learned to do this, but has reached the point where he has difficulty in getting along with any children.

Jane is never allowed to play at anyone's house even in her immediate neighborhood. She can have neighbor children to come play at her house where her mother can supervise the play. Mrs. Smith takes Jane to and from school because she will not risk letting her ride as one of a car pool.

Tim's parents are always busy at the church or in the community. They are not going to let Tim interfere with their out-of-home activities. They love Tim, take him wherever they go in the day or night. They cannot understand his constant striving for attention. "We give him every attention. He is always with us. We never leave him," they explained. Yet it does not occur to them that they are more occupied with their own interests than with Tim's needs.

Mrs. Tate is not willing to leave Lou at school. She said that Lou had never been content to stay away from her. When Mrs. Tate stays at school, she tells Lou just what to do. "Get a story-book." "You can do that puzzle." "Sing with the children. You know that song."

Mrs. Thomas said, "Julia can hardly wait each morning to get to school. When she comes home, she tells me many things she does. She talks of her new friends, calling them by name. She wants to save her paintings and drawings. I have a special bulletin board where she can put her own work. In her room there is a big box for her to keep other treasures."

Parents are tied emotionally with their child. They have had responsibility for him from his birth and will be responsible for him many years after his kindergarten experience. They are concerned not only with his development now but also with what he will become later. Ambitious for him, they are prone to be over-anxious for him to excel. They are sensitive over his shortcomings and his failures and feel they are being criticized when his behavior is not acceptable. Sometimes they want him to do those things they themselves have always longed to do but for which they never had the chance. Mr. James wanted to be a football player, but was not strong enough. Now he is dressing five-year-old Sid in a football outfit and attempts to play ball with him, is constantly telling him he must eat those foods that will make him strong. Mrs. Clark wanted to play the piano well but never had the chance to learn. Now she asks how soon Lucy can begin piano lessons.

How parents feel about themselves, as well as how they feel about their children, influences their attitude toward school and the child's experiences there. They really want to do a good job of rearing their children. They want them to have a good education, but they are not sure what this good education should include.

### *Teachers Are Different*

Miss Terry likes children, makes them feel comfortable with her. She does not hover over them, but shows her interest in them in friendly ways.

Mrs. Green wanted to have children of her own, but never had any. In each group she finds a child she wishes could have been her own. This chosen child receives special attention, although Mrs. Green says that she has no favorites.

Any child who is a behavior problem is disturbing to Miss Brown. She is always afraid she cannot cope with the situation. Insecure herself, she dislikes the child who gives her trouble. However, she is not willing to acknowledge her real feelings toward the child.



Mrs. Jenkins likes neatness and order to a fault. She expects obedience and demands it immediately. She enjoys the power she feels when children look to her for direction.

Miss Johnson works diligently on plans for each day. The day does not seem successful to her if those plans are not completed. It confuses her for children to have plans of their own. She says it upsets her whole day when parents come to visit.

Miss Davis believes in children. She accepts each child as an individual. She, too, has over-all plans, but these are best developed by providing a challenging environment for work and play, taking advantage of opportunities for varied experiences. Also, she has made a study of children and how they learn. She feels secure with them and with their parents, who have a place in her over-all plans.

The teacher's personality, her philosophy of education, her ability and preparation for teaching, her attitudes toward children and adults, affect the relationship she will have with the children and their parents.

### *Partnership: a Challenge*

How the teacher and the parents in their different relationships to children can form a partnership, the purpose of which is to work for the development of each child, is a challenge to all concerned. Understanding and accepting each one is important. Each needs to know and to be sympathetic with the attitudes, the feelings of the other. Both need to discover the reasons behind those actions and feelings. If judgment can be withheld for a time, better relationships can more easily be established and solutions to problems can more readily be worked out together. This takes thought, effort, and patience. The teacher is in a position to initiate the process. Some steps through which she may work are:

#### REGISTRATION FOR KINDERGARTEN IN THE SPRING PRIOR TO THE FALL TERM

Parents and children may be invited to visit the school during registration week. If they can come in small groups at an hour

when regular kindergarten is not in session, the teacher will have more time to show the room and equipment. One or two mothers of the present class can be on hand to look after the children and take registrations. While the children play, the teacher can talk informally to individual parents. A confidential record blank is given to each parent with the request that it be filled in and returned to the teacher within two weeks. (See a sample of such a blank at the end of this chapter.)

### A VISIT TO THE HOME BEFORE SCHOOL BEGINS

A friendly visit by the teacher to the home before school begins establishes good relationships. From the home visit the teacher has the opportunity to know something of the type of home, of the relationship between parents and child, and to discover some interest of the child which will help in a personal greeting later. The parent and child get acquainted with the teacher apart from school. A convenient time for visiting should be arranged before the actual visit. The visit should be a short one. Part of the conversation will be directed toward helping the child look forward to his experiences at kindergarten.

### A MEETING FOR PARENTS A WEEK BEFORE THE OPENING OF SCHOOL IN THE FALL

This will be an appropriate time to discuss the kindergarten program, the type of experiences offered, and the opportunities for children to play, to explore, to experiment without being expected to produce finished work. At this meeting parents will get an idea of the teacher's philosophy of education through hearing her tell in an informal way what she expects of children. Parents will have the opportunity of expressing their ideas, of asking questions. Definite information will be given regarding hours for kindergarten, length of term, dates of holidays, what the child needs to bring, what is expected of parents driving groups of children. This information should be distributed in mimeographed form and discussed so that questions may be cleared.

## PLANNED SCHOOL VISITS OF PARENTS

Nothing will help to interpret the kindergarten program more than a planned visit by each mother, and by as many fathers as can arrange to come. In order to have only one or two visitors at a time, a parent should sign up for a particular day. The purpose of the visit should be made clear. The visitor should know something of the schedule, of what to observe, how to accept her child as one of the group. The visit should start at the beginning of the school day, continue until dismissal time, and be followed by a conference with the teacher. The schedule for these visits can begin after the children have been in school six weeks. By this time they should be somewhat adjusted to the routines of school, to the teacher, and to the other children. (See suggested material at the end of this chapter.)

## INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES

Individual conferences are being found more satisfactory than written reports in helping teachers and parents to work efficiently with children. The conference provides better opportunities for the teacher to understand the child and his parents, for establishing good relationships, and for getting the parents' reaction to the child's school experiences. It helps the parents to know the teacher and to get a clearer idea of what she is trying to do for the individual child and for the group. Through satisfactory conferences, mutual respect and better understanding develop. A basis for seeing the child as he is, for measuring his progress, and for planning next steps in his development is established.

Conferences take time, planning, and work both before and afterwards. In order to have successful conferences, the teacher must be convinced of the value of such contacts. She must make the necessary preparations, have an understanding of child growth and development, and have some skill in working with adults. All of these abilities can be acquired with study and practice.

Whenever possible the father and mother should both be present. The conference should take place at school where the

teacher has her materials and records. The teacher and parents should be free from outside interruptions. If it is necessary for the kindergarten child and perhaps a younger one to come, provision should be made for another adult to care for the children in another room. No conference should take place in the presence of the child. There may be a time when the child is included, but at that time he is a part of the conference group, not a person to be talked about but one to talk with. The parents need to know the maximum time the conference will last so that they may make plans accordingly. Usually twenty to thirty minutes should give enough time for the participants to confer without feeling hurried.

Regular conferences are held not because of any outstanding problem to be worked out, but to allow the teacher and parent to talk of the child, his normal growth and development, and to check to see if he is getting the kind of experiences he needs.

Sometimes a mother requests a conference because of a problem she needs to solve or because of something she does not understand. The teacher listens, trying to look beyond the words to what is really the trouble. She does not give any "pat" answers, but tries to think through the problem with the parent and perhaps give more than one suggestion to try. What may be troubling the mother may merely indicate normal stages of growth in her child. She may need to know more about child development. Most of all she may need assurance and renewed faith in herself. Talking out her fears and her problems with a sympathetic person who also cares for her child will relieve her tensions and help her to see the situation in a clearer light.

The teacher may be the one to request a conference because of some particular behavior she has noted. Although she has a definite reason and a purpose for the conference, she will give time for the parents to bring up their own problems or questions. It is well to begin the conference with some favorable report of the child, emphasizing his strengths. Then the problem itself should be stated in a positive way. There is a tendency on the part of many teachers and parents to criticize, to try to lay the blame on



someone or something. This will not help in finding a solution. The discussion should be based on facts, not on prejudices or opinions. It helps to have samples of the child's work on which date and comments have been written, and anecdotal records of what he has said or done. At the right time the teacher should bring the conference to a close, perhaps summarizing what was discussed and agreements reached on next steps. It is important to end the conference with an expression of confidence and a feeling of friendliness.

#### RECORD OF A CONFERENCE AND THE RESULTS

After some months in kindergarten, Jimmy began to have temper tantrums. Whenever he could not have his way with children or with a teacher, a tantrum developed. It became necessary for the teacher to request a conference with Mrs. Cook, Jimmy's mother, with whom good relations were already established. During the conference, Mrs. Cook volunteered that she and her husband were having difficulties with Jimmy at home with just such outbursts as had happened at school. The teacher and Mrs. Cook tried to discover why this change in behavior was taking place. Neither could find a cause then. Both said that they would observe Jimmy closely and ponder over the situation, meanwhile having as much patience as possible with Jimmy.

A few days later the teacher invited Jimmy to ride with her to get some clay for kindergarten. She hoped that this contact away from school would help her to find out what was troubling Jimmy. While she did not get any clues to Jimmy's present needs, she and Jimmy had a satisfying experience together.

Mr. and Mrs. Cook talked over the problem at home. After some days Mr. Cook came up with what he thought might have some bearing on the subject. Looking at life at home from a different viewpoint, he made the following observations: Jimmy, the oldest of three children, was an investigator, a manipulator. He was always working on some project. His things were often in the way of other members of the family. Jimmy was frequently repri-

manded, not for wrongdoing so much as for being a nuisance. Joan, his sister of four years, was a quiet child, always busy, but never seeming to disturb things or people. Rarely was she corrected. Bob, eight months old, attracted the attention of relatives and friends. Mr. Cook noted that when he came home each evening he picked up the baby first. He usually commented on something Joan made, but he found himself telling Jimmy to put away the nails or scolding him for leaving the lumber out in the yard. Mr. Cook decided he was not being fair to Jimmy, that he needed to be more interested in his projects, to give him more time. He arranged to do something special with Jimmy alone on Saturday afternoons.

Mr. Cook's plan worked in time, not immediately. Gradually the temper tantrums ceased. Jimmy gained more self-confidence and self-control. In this case, the conference started the quest for a reason for Jimmy's problem at school and at home. The parents were the ones who found the answer to Jimmy's needs.

### KEEPING INDIVIDUAL RECORDS

The teacher should have a folder for each child. In this should go the confidential record filled out by the parent before school began, the health and attendance record, record of any individual conferences concerning the child, record of home and school visits, notes on significant behavior, report of revealing conversations with the child or remarks he has made, any information concerning his attitudes toward others, a record of activities he chooses most often, and samples of his work. This folder will be of great help in preparing for a parent conference and can be used during the conference.

Since the child has a choice of activities, the teacher will need to check from time to time the materials he uses. She might observe that he always plays with blocks or works with puzzles. She will want him to have experiences with various media of expression, and she will, therefore, encourage him to try other types of activities. A record of what he does in the "Work and Play Ac-

tivities" time<sup>1</sup> and of the materials he uses will help her to guide him into a more varied program.

In keeping anecdotal records, the teacher will have to work out as simple a plan as she can. It is important to use the identical words of the child when writing what he says. Something of the background of the situation must be given. All opinions should be avoided in keeping this record. It is as one studies the various records of a child that one may discover the cause of the difficulty he is having. A pencil and paper close at hand or a little notebook in her pocket help to facilitate the jotting down of notes that are needed. The need for observing individual children and for keeping records of the observations points to the fact that the kindergarten group should be a small one, not over twenty children.<sup>2</sup>

#### A SAMPLE OF A RECORD ABOUT A CHILD

Tim entered kindergarten when he was five and a half years old. He plays with older boys in the neighborhood. All of his neighbor friends are already in grades at school. Tim is still in the manipulative stage in working with paints and clay. He can work all the puzzles easily. He likes stories of adventure. He shows little interest in using blocks with children, although his father says he builds fancy castles at home.

Oct. 8—Tim joined the play with blocks. Several boys had built a road using big hollow blocks and ramps. The width of the road across the bridge would allow only one big truck at a time, so the boys asked for a one-way sign to help traffic along. Tim insisted on going the wrong way across the bridge, knocking other trucks off the road. The teacher sat down near this group and reminded Tim each time of the way to go. Soon Tim left the play.

Oct. 11—Tim used paints at the easel. He hit the paper hard

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1. See Suggested Program, page 85.

2. "It is desirable to have no more than twenty in any one kindergarten group. . . . One teacher for 8 to 10 four-year-olds. One teacher for 8 to 12 five-years-olds." Quoted from leaflet No. 6, "Your Church—and a Through-the-Week Pre-School," Katherine B. Hoefflich, Portfolio "The Church and Children Under Four," National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

with his brush, splashing paint as he did so. The newspaper on the floor under the easel became quite soiled. Tim kept watching the teacher as he painted. She showed no sign of disapproval of Tim's use of paints, since he was not disturbing the activities of others. When worktime was over, the teacher asked Tim to help clean the painting area. He willingly did a good job.

Oct. 15—The group of children was seated on the rug. When the teacher picked up the Bible to hold as she told a story from it, Tim said, "The Bible! I hate it!" The teacher made no comment, but started the story. Tim began to make noises which grew louder and louder until it was necessary to stop and ask a helping teacher to take Tim outdoors for a walk. While on the walk, Tim threw a rock at a kitten. When the assistant teacher said, "That could hurt the kitten," Tim replied, "I don't care. I hate cats."

Oct. 21—Talking aloud, apparently to no one, Tim said, "My friends go to school. They act ugly and I act ugly."

Oct. 22—A conference was held with Tim's mother and father. The teacher gained some additional information about the parents and the home. The father is a dentist. He is superintendent of a Sunday school. The mother is very active in women's work in the church. Tim has one sister, a year and a half younger than he. He has several teen-age cousins of whom he is very fond. Tim is delighted when he can be with one cousin at a time, for then he gets attention. When two of the cousins are together, they won't play with Tim. The mother said that Tim adores his father. Tim has gone to Sunday school since he was a baby. He gives the same type of trouble at church school now as he does at kindergarten. Up until this past year there has been no complaint of Tim's behavior. The mother and father think Tim wants to be like the older boys. Neither parent had any suggestion to give the teacher except that she force Tim to behave. The teacher suggested that the father have as many happy experiences with Tim as possible, doing things with him such as building a house for his dog, taking walks with him, reading to him at home.

Oct. 27—The teacher visited Tim's Sunday school class. Tim's



father was helping in the group that Sunday, so the teacher had an opportunity of observing his relation to Tim in a group situation. The father was impatient with Tim when he refused to play a game, insisted on his playing even though Tim cried as he played. When Tim knocked over some blocks, his father said, "How stupid can you be?"

Note: These records begin to point up some of the feelings that are troubling Tim.

### GROUP RECORDS

The teacher needs to keep a record of the various group experiences. This will help her to plan a balanced program. Records of conversation during a play activity often are revealing. Much can be learned about children's reactions to each other in this way and of their interpretations of life about them.<sup>3</sup>

### PARENT MEETINGS, STUDY AND DISCUSSION GROUPS

These occasions when parents and teachers get together as a group can be varied. A mother found a teacher working on doll clothes one day after school. "We mothers can take that job off your hands," said Mrs. Waitt. "Why not meet here in the kindergarten room?" asked Miss Jones. "I'll be here, too, and we can visit as we sew." During the sewing session on doll clothes, many questions about children were discussed. Informal talks during "fix-it" sessions became popular that year. Some teachers are successful in getting the fathers to school in the evenings to make and repair equipment. Doing a service for the kindergarten opens the way for good fellowship and for chats on child development.

"Back to Kindergarten Night" was one type of parents' meeting that was successful at a particular school. Children participated in preparation by putting stamps on the invitations, which they then mailed at the post office. On the day of the meeting they helped get the room ready. They did not come back at night. At

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3. See Chapter IV, pages 73-74.

the meeting, parents spent the first half-hour experimenting with kindergarten equipment and materials. To many of them, their child had suggested an activity to choose. After this period of work and play a social hour was enjoyed. In addition to helping parents to get acquainted, this meeting gave them a better understanding and appreciation of the experiences provided for their children.

In study and discussion groups, it is important to have a good leader who knows how to work with adults and who comes well prepared. This leader provides for participation of group members, but keeps the discussion to the subject in hand. Members of the group should have a chance to suggest topics and assist in planning the meetings. The purpose and topic of each meeting should be announced ahead of time. Reference material should be made available for further study. The meeting should be within a time limit previously set.

### A SECOND VISIT TO THE HOME

This may be made when some special occasion offers the opportunity. A visit from the teacher is appreciated when a new baby arrives or when the kindergarten child is convalescing from an illness. There are some children who especially need a second visit, even if no special occasion inspires it. A good timing for this visit might be around the middle of the year. This again should be just a friendly call on parent and child.

### THE BOOK SHELF

Books and pamphlets often give needed help. These can be placed where parents may read them as they wait for children or come early for a conference. Mrs. Long was glancing through a book on child development one day when waiting for the teacher after school. She had come to ask about her four-year-old daughter. When the teacher was free to talk to her, Mrs. Long said, "I guess I don't need to be as worried as I thought I did. Beatrice

dawdles so much, I was getting disturbed. I see that many four-year-olds do that, so I guess she is not abnormal.”

Parents should have the opportunity of borrowing these books for a stated length of time. A cartoon or a quotation placed on a bulletin board where the parents can easily see it can be a “teaser” for further exploration of some material.

## PARENTS’ PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Parents feel a more vital interest in the school when they are useful there.

They can contribute of their talents, in such ways as telling stories, adding to music experiences, building or mending equipment.

They can help with special activities, such as going on trips, making cookies.

They can plan their own study group meetings with the guidance of the director.

They can help publicize the school, taking pictures of school activities.

They can assist on special occasions, such as when a teacher or helper is absent, serve as hostess when special company is invited.

## TELEPHONE CALLS

This is a good way to find out about a child’s absence from school or to make other friendly inquiries. Telephone calls should be used as in-between contacts, not to discuss difficulties concerning the child. Such matters are taken up at personal conferences.

## SPECIAL OCCASIONS AT SCHOOL

It is usually better to have one or two parents at a time, but there are occasions when all the children and parents can have rich experiences together. These occasions should never be ones

of exhibition or "show off." Children—and perhaps, at times, parents—should have part in planning these experiences.

Christmas and Thanksgiving provide opportunities for worship together, times when children and parents can tell stories and sing together.

Picnics are fun and add to opportunities for good fellowship. Perhaps at the end of the year the children and teachers might plan a simple party for parents. A part of the plan can include sharing some of the learnings of the year—poems, stories, songs, creative rhythms.

In a good curriculum for the young child there is no place for elaborate costuming or for learning lines for a play.

### SUGGESTED MATERIAL TO BE GIVEN TO PARENTS AT VARIOUS TIMES

The following can be given to parents at registration:

#### HELPING YOUR CHILD GET READY FOR SCHOOL

School can be an interesting adventure. Your child will be better able to get the most out of this experience if he

anticipates going to school. Talk before school begins of what he will do there. Be willing to let him grow up and have experiences outside of home.

has satisfying experiences in playing with children his own age.

can follow simple directions.

is learning to take care of his clothes, put them on, take them off, and hang them up. Be sure to label wraps, hats, gloves, overshoes.

has happy experiences at home with children's books, stories, music.

is in good physical health. Have him checked by his doctor and dentist. Be sure he has been vaccinated, has had diphtheria and polio immunizations.

knows his full name, where he lives, telephone number, his father's name.



The following may be given at the parents' meeting before school starts:

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR RIDING IN CARS FOR SAFETY MEASURES

No rough playing.

Children must sit down when riding.

Children must wait until adult gives permission to get out of car.

#### SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING WHAT CHILDREN WEAR AND BRING TO THE SCHOOL

In order that children may enter fully into the kindergarten activities, please observe the following:

Dress your child comfortably in play clothes.

Do not let your child wear necklaces, rings, bracelets, and other such items that are easily lost.

Do not let him bring any money.

Do not let him bring guns or other war toys to school.

Consult the teacher before your child brings anything you think will contribute to good experiences. We welcome such contributions but like to be able to plan for them.

#### PLANNED SCHOOL VISITS

Parents have a better opportunity of knowing the purposes underlying the school program if they have periods of time when they can observe children at work and play. Best results follow when a parent comes for the school day and uses a guide for observation.

The following may be given when parents visit school:

#### HOW TO OBSERVE CHILDREN

Be friendly but do not insist upon response.

Be casual.

Be quiet and calm. Speak quietly to children when it is necessary for you to speak.

Observe them without seeming to pay too close attention.  
Resist temptation to talk about them in their presence.  
Treat them as friends.

#### OBSERVING AN INDIVIDUAL CHILD

What are his main interests?

Does he get satisfaction from what he does?

Is he independent in his actions and his thinking, or  
does he follow others constantly?

Does he experiment with different materials and activities,  
or does he tend to do the same things over and over?

Does he use materials and toys with reasonable care, or  
is he destructive?

Does he accept what responsibility he is capable of  
carrying?

Does he play with children or play alone?

How does he get along with others?

#### GENERAL RULES FOR VISITING

Do not carry on conversation with adults while observing. If  
you wish to talk to the teacher, ask for a conference after school.

Accept your child as he is. He may be self-conscious with you  
at school. Pay him as little direct attention as possible without  
seeming to reject him. Observe other children as well as your  
child.

A kindergarten day usually includes the following periods:

Work and play activities

Cleaning up

Group experiences

Toilet time

Library time

Lunch

Resting

Outdoor play

Music

The following is a brief description of each and what to observe:

*Work and play activities.* Children are busy in activities of their own choosing. Our plan is to

- seek creative work, not to dictate what to do;
- give simple help in handling materials when the child is ready;
- be interested in what the child is doing, making suggestions only when necessary or when help is needed;
- be ready to let him talk about his work if he wishes;
- try to broaden his thinking by a comment, a question, or by introducing new material;
- provide opportunities for work and play in we-relationships;
- help children clarify their thinking;
- encourage purposeful activities.

*Cleaning up.* Children learn to put things away neatly in their proper places as they finish using them. Unfinished work is put away for next day. Everyone helps during clean-up period.

*Group experiences (conversation, special stories).* Religious experiences come at various times during the day. However, at this particular time the teacher endeavors to focus thinking on something that will help children in their relationship to God, to Jesus, to the church, to the Bible, or to each other. It may be they will talk of something God has created. What is brought in on a particular morning by the teacher or children may influence what happens at this period. A prayer or song may be used. A story may be told, one of Jesus or a "here and now" one that will help children as they live with others. This important period is not left to chance but is planned carefully, although the day's plan may be changed by something brought to school or something that happened during the morning. The teacher tries at this time as well as all during the day to meet the needs of children to help them grow in religious living.

*Toilet time.* Only a few children go to the toilets at a time, in

order to avoid waiting at the toilet door. We help children to remember to flush the toilet, to wash their hands with soap, to dry hands. We give plenty of time but expect no playing in the rest rooms, since this is not the time or place for play.

*Library time.* While some children go to the toilet, others look at storybooks. This group is a changing one, since children are taking turns getting ready for lunch. We encourage children to hold books correctly, turning pages as they should. The book is put in its proper place on the book shelf when the child has finished with it. An adult may be free to read to those who want to listen. At times listening is optional; at other times, the entire group participates in listening.

*Lunch.* Children whose turn it is to help, fix the tables while others are looking at books. At lunch, the children sit at tables, wait for a short blessing, then talk as they have their juice and crackers. When lunch is over, each child puts his glass on a tray, his napkin in the trash basket, then gets his rug for resting.

*Resting.* Children lie quietly. A relaxed position is encouraged. Sometimes quiet music is played; sometimes a story is read; sometimes complete quiet is enjoyed. When resting is over, children fold their rugs, keeping the "floor side" outside, and put rugs away.

*Outdoor play.* Children are encouraged to try out various types of yard equipment. If a child shows any fear, he is helped until he feels safe. This is a time for climbing, running, and other strenuous exercise.

*Music.* This is a creative activity. Each child is encouraged to progress at his or her own rate of development. We seek to free the child from any inhibitions that prevent freedom of movement, use of imagination, and creative expression.



## CONFIDENTIAL RECORD

Name of child \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of Birth: Month \_\_\_\_\_ Day \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_ Birthplace \_\_\_\_\_  
 If no one at home, call \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
 in case of emergency  
 Pediatrician \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

*Family*

Father: Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Birthplace \_\_\_\_\_ Church Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_  
 Occupation \_\_\_\_\_ Business Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
 If deceased, date \_\_\_\_\_ Cause \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mother: Maiden name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Birthplace \_\_\_\_\_ Church Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_  
 Occupation \_\_\_\_\_ Business Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
 If deceased, date \_\_\_\_\_ Cause \_\_\_\_\_  
 Are parents divorced? \_\_\_\_\_ Or separated? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Give any deviation from normal home life \_\_\_\_\_

## Other members of household:

Brothers, names and ages \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sisters, names and ages \_\_\_\_\_  
 Others (Give relationships to child. Include servants.) \_\_\_\_\_

*Residence*

Is residence a house? \_\_\_\_\_ Apartment? \_\_\_\_\_ Or hotel? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of rooms \_\_\_\_\_ Does child have his own room? \_\_\_\_\_  
 If not, with whom does he share a room? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Does he have outdoor play space? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Outdoor play equipment? \_\_\_\_\_

*Physical Record*

Present health \_\_\_\_\_  
 Routine habits well established? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 Handicaps: Eyes \_\_\_\_\_ Ears \_\_\_\_\_ Teeth \_\_\_\_\_ Nose \_\_\_\_\_  
 Throat \_\_\_\_\_ Heart \_\_\_\_\_ Speech \_\_\_\_\_ Deformity \_\_\_\_\_  
 Does he take cold easily? \_\_\_\_\_ Other handicaps \_\_\_\_\_

Check immunization child has had:

Smallpox vaccination \_\_\_\_\_ Diphtheria antitoxin \_\_\_\_\_

Typhoid serum \_\_\_\_\_ Whooping cough \_\_\_\_\_

Tetanus antitoxin \_\_\_\_\_ Salk vaccine \_\_\_\_\_

Check diseases child has had:

Chicken pox \_\_\_\_\_ Meningitis \_\_\_\_\_ Scarlet fever \_\_\_\_\_

Diphtheria \_\_\_\_\_ Infantile paralysis \_\_\_\_\_ Smallpox \_\_\_\_\_

Encephalitis \_\_\_\_\_ Mumps \_\_\_\_\_ Typhoid fever \_\_\_\_\_

Red measles \_\_\_\_\_ Pneumonia \_\_\_\_\_ Whooping cough \_\_\_\_\_

German measles \_\_\_\_\_

If child has any allergies, what are they? \_\_\_\_\_

Give any additional health information you consider helpful \_\_\_\_\_

### *Characteristic Behavior (Social-Emotional)*

How does child react to other children? \_\_\_\_\_

To adults? \_\_\_\_\_

To new situations? \_\_\_\_\_

Does the child show dependence? \_\_\_\_\_ Independence? \_\_\_\_\_

Signs of fear? \_\_\_\_\_

Signs of insecurity? \_\_\_\_\_

### *Mental Development*

Are his reactions quick? \_\_\_\_\_ Slow? \_\_\_\_\_

Does he show initiative? \_\_\_\_\_

Does he have ability to express ideas? \_\_\_\_\_

Is he alert in observation? \_\_\_\_\_

What are his special interests? \_\_\_\_\_

### *Past Experiences (Brief explanation)*

Nursery school \_\_\_\_\_

Play groups \_\_\_\_\_

Trips \_\_\_\_\_

Sunday School \_\_\_\_\_

Special information or comment \_\_\_\_\_

## RESOURCE BOOKS

- Counseling with Parents in Early Childhood Education*, Edith M. Leonard, Dorothy Van Deman, and Lillian E. Miles. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1954.
- Teachers Guide to Education in Early Childhood*, Chapter V, compiled by Bureau of Elementary Education, California State Department of Education, Sacramento, California, 1956.
- Effective Home-School Relations*, James L. Hymes, Jr. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1953.
- Living in the Kindergarten*, Chapters XVIII, XIX, XX, Clarice D. Wills and William H. Stegeman. Chicago: Follett Publishing Co., 1951, revised 1956.

## PAMPHLETS

- "Being a Good Parent," James L. Hymes, Jr. Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1949.
- "Helping Children Get Along in School," Bess Goodykoontz. Science Research Associates, Inc., 57 Grand Ave., Chicago, 1955.
- "Individual Parent-Teacher Conferences," Katherine E. D'Evelyn. Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1945.
- "Planning for America's Children, Education for Children Under Six," Office of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington, D. C., 1955.
- "Reporting on the Growth of Children," Association for Childhood Education International, 1200 Fifteenth St., N.W., Washington, D. C., 1953.
- "You Can't Be Human Alone," Margaret E. Kuhn. National Council of Churches, New York, 1956.
- "Working with Parents," Hazel Gabbard. Bulletin No. 7, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1948.



## *Curriculum*

Since a child learns principally through what he does, the kindergarten program is one of action, based upon experiences within the interest, understandings, and maturity of the four- and five-year-olds. It is impossible to outline a curriculum that can be followed exactly, for the curriculum is not just a program or a "course of study." It is influenced by the total school environment and all that happens here.

Each year is different. Every group varies from another group. Even interaction within the group changes from time to time. Each child comes with his own background of experiences, reacting in his own way to the new environment. However, this does not mean that the teacher eliminates a general curriculum plan. Rather it calls for continuing planning on the part of the teacher and of the children, evaluating and replanning from time to time. Changes in plans are made as the child or the group develop in situations that never stay the same. Learnings shown in changing attitudes and behavior give direction to the need of other experiences. Therefore, the curriculum is never finished but is constantly in the process of being planned.

### *Guides for Planning*

In planning experiences for learning the teacher must have clear goals for the development of each child in all aspects of his living. She is guided by her knowledge of the group and of individual children, their needs and the stage of development of each.



She must keep in mind the factors that influence learning. Materials and equipment are important tools to be used, but even more important is the climate within which learning takes place. Children develop best where

- there is freedom within established limits;
- exploration, experimentation, and creative activities are encouraged;
- each person is loved and respected;
- each can learn comfortably from failures and successes.

That the children may have broad areas of experiences, the teacher needs to check her planning against her goals. These should include growth in

- health and safety habits, ability to relax, co-ordination of big muscles;
- ability to feel secure with adults and other children, to respond to new situations with satisfaction;
- understanding and acceptance of self and others;
- ability to get along happily with others at work and play, to accept some group responsibility;
- becoming more independent, meeting and solving problems, doing constructive thinking, making wise choices;
- ability to express ideas in art, music, and language;
- discovering and understanding the world about them;
- interest in science, literature, art, music;
- use of skills within ability of each. These include: increased vocabulary, word and number concepts; gaining facts that are of use and interest; becoming more aware of God and His love; wonder and appreciation of God's creations and ability to communicate with God.

In selecting content for the curriculum, the teacher is guided by her goals and the interests of the children and their readiness for specific material. She takes advantage of an interest that can be used to encourage further learning. On a walk in the fall

a group of children gathered colored leaves. The teacher encouraged conversation about the leaves. Differences in color and shape were noted. Choice leaves were pressed. Such books as *Johnny Maple-Leaf*<sup>1</sup> and *Now It's Fall*<sup>2</sup> were placed on the bookshelf. Poems such as "Autumn Leaves,"<sup>3</sup> "Walking in the Woods,"<sup>4</sup> and songs such as "Falling Leaves,"<sup>5</sup> "The Little Leaves,"<sup>6</sup> were enjoyed. Paintings by some of the children reflected their interest in autumn colors. Leaves brought by the children from home or from a family trip to the woods decorated the kindergarten room. As the children showed delight and wonder, it was easy to talk of the beauties of fall that God planned. The verse, "He has made everything beautiful in its time,"<sup>7</sup> had special meaning as autumn colors were enjoyed. Again in the spring, leaves and trees were a source of interest. At this time young, green leaves were watched. New learnings were built on those gained in past experiences.

It is the teacher's responsibility to supply content to enrich and extend experiences. Books such as those listed at the end of this chapter will help her, in addition to the resources of her church and neighborhood. She must plan not only for a day and week, but also for a year. However, she must be ready to change her plans to meet opportunities and needs of the moment. Often she has to take stock of the experiences the group has had, check her goals, and decide what new experiences and activities the children need and what new content should be included in her

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1. *Johnny Maple-Leaf*, Alvin R. Tresselt. Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Co., Inc., 1948.

2. *Now It's Fall*, Lois Lenski. Oxford University Press, 1948.

3. "Autumn Leaves," *Very Young Verses*, Barbara P. Geismer and Antoinette Suter. Houghton Mifflin Co., 1945.

4. "Walking in the Woods," *Told Under the Blue Umbrella*, Association for Childhood Education International. The Macmillan Co., 1933.

5. "Falling Leaves," *Singing Time*, Satis N. Coleman and Alice G. Thorn. John Day Co., 1930.

6. "The Little Leaves," *Songs We Sing*, Mattie C. Leatherwood. Broadman Press, 1939.

7. Ecclesiastes 3:11a, Revised Standard Version.

plans. Thus, the kindergarten program becomes a vital, challenging, and changing one in which learning takes place.

### *How Children Learn*

The many factors that influence learning must be taken into account in planning the kindergarten curriculum. These include health, interests and purposes, emotional and social adjustments, the child's feeling toward himself, his attitude toward others. Every child learns through what he does, his own experiences. He learns those parts of each experience that he can use at that time, not necessarily those parts which the adult plans for him to learn. He builds upon the learnings achieved from each experience. The teacher can supply many opportunities for learning through a rich environment, but she cannot force the learning. The child must be ready for those experiences, must have a purpose that is his own. The child learns best when the desire for that specific learning is greatest. For instance, the kindergarten child is gaining control over his big muscle movements and is ready to develop greater co-ordination of these muscles. He wants to climb, to hop, to skip. He learns under comfortable, relaxed conditions. On the other hand, he is not ready for frequent use of the smaller muscles. He becomes tense when working with small objects, using a pencil, coloring within lines, or trying to see small pictures, letters, or word symbols. Creative efforts are blocked when he is under pressure.

The senses of smell, taste, touch, sight, and hearing contribute to learning. This means that children must be encouraged to use their senses as they experiment, explore, and investigate. The materials within the kindergarten do not have a "no touch" sign on them. Often when a picture is shown, a child holds out his hands as he says, "Let me see." To him seeing includes touching. Give a child a new medium to use, such as modeling dough (made of flour, salt, water), and he pokes, punches, looks at it, perhaps tastes a bit before he really attempts to make objects. In kindergarten children practice listening. Sometimes they name

the sounds they hear. Again they listen to music and interpret differences in sound and rhythm. Voices are different. Many times a child can tell who is speaking by the voice tones. The teacher's voice influences the behavior of the group. Children will listen better to a well-modulated, soft voice. Learnings come through sight, but children need many opportunities to talk about what they see, to make use of what is seen. Keen and accurate observation can be cultivated.

Children learn through imitating others. They imitate adults and children. In their play they often become others who interest them, people whom they like and also those whom they dislike. Actions of others are catching. Simple dramatization and dramatic play offer opportunities for trying out characteristics and vocations of others. "Play like" contributes to learning.

All of us build upon what we already know. Through association we gain new concepts. To the kindergarten child, the church may have been just a building, but as he comes to have many happy associations there, gains new friends, feels comfortable, the meaning of the church expands. It includes a place where people like you and believe in you, where there are friends your own age, where all of you have many happy experiences together, where these learnings are related to the idea of God and God's love.

Children are curious, and in satisfying this innate curiosity they learn many things. They ask questions, some of which are motivated by the desire for attention and companionship, others because they want answers that will help them to gain information. The teacher encourages questioning, but instead of giving all the answers or continually "telling," she and the children make discoveries together. Beans are planted in the garden. What will happen to them? In order to find out, some beans are planted in cotton floating in a glass of water, others in dirt in a glass jar. Before the beans come up in the garden, children can see the root and leaf formations in those beans in water and in the jar of dirt. They discover for themselves some information on how beans grow. When the answer to a question is far beyond them,



children often accept what they can and don't worry about what they are not ready to receive, if the adult is understanding and doesn't make too much of it. Such was the case with Charles when he said, "It's hard to explain to anyone about a boy and a girl."

There must be satisfaction in learning. Children get discouraged if they meet too many failures. Perhaps the child who repeatedly says, "I can't draw a girl," has too high standards set for him. He can't accomplish what is expected of him. The child who is given plenty of time to manipulate materials, to experiment with them without criticism, develops faith in himself and so attempts to do many things. His drawing of a girl may not be the drawing some adults want, but at this stage he is satisfied with his own interpretation of a girl.

Bob tried again and again to make a bridge with blocks. Each time the top block would slide off because the sides of the bridge were not the same height. The teacher, knowing Bob needed to succeed, asked, "Have you tried another block this size?" as she pointed to the big block on one side. Bob took the smaller block away and tried the big one. He smiled as he put the top board in place and discovered his bridge was a steady one.

If the child is to learn, he needs to make choices, to have freedom to choose his activities. The very environment offers choices. His interests will guide him in his selection. The teacher must be willing to let him choose, to honor the choices that do not conflict with the rights of others. There are times, however, when children need help in trying out new media for expression. When Bill has built with blocks for a long period of time, the teacher may ask Bill to choose another type of job tomorrow—perhaps painting, working with clay, using tools or some new material or equipment she has added to interest him. She realizes that children need experiences with many types of materials.

### *Centers of Interest*

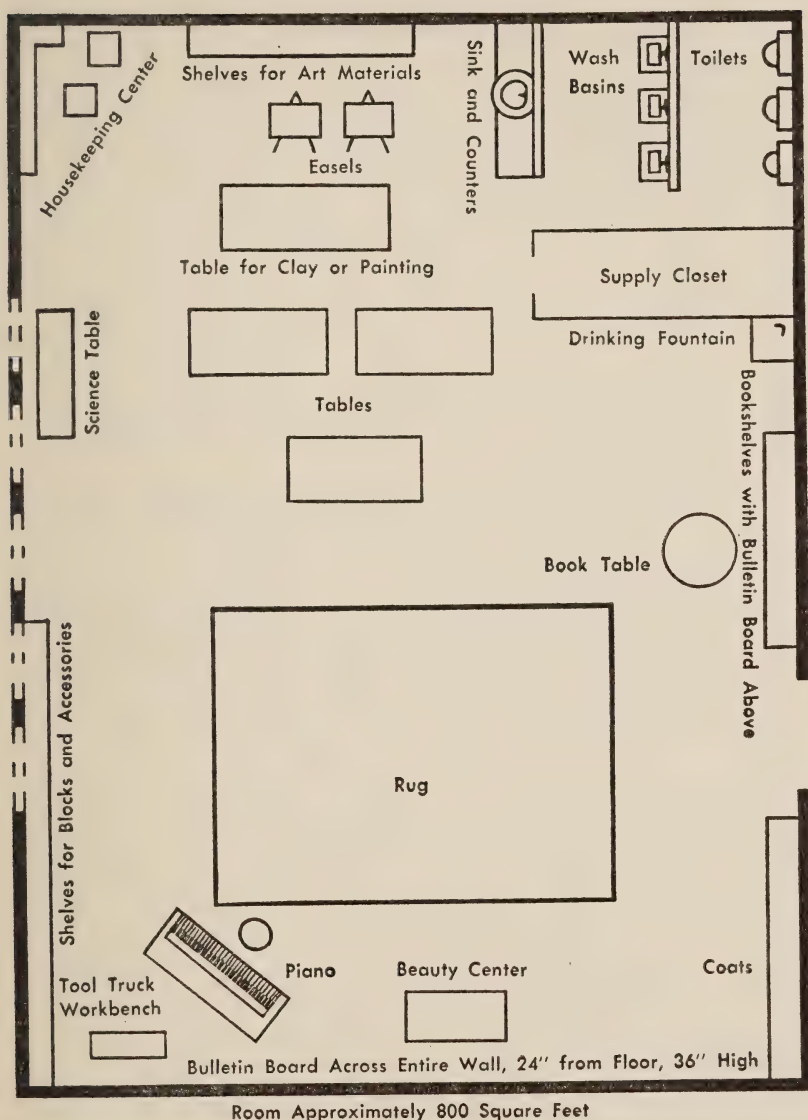
To meet the interests of different children, to give a variety of experiences, to allow for choices, centers of interest are set up

in the kindergarten room. These may include a center for house-keeping; one for work with blocks, trucks, and such equipment; one for art where are found paints, clay, crayons, construction materials; one for books and puzzles; and one for science. A work-bench where tools and wood are used is desirable. A beauty center—a small table for flowers and the Bible, placed under a suitable picture—will influence the child in his feeling of worship. These centers should be located in the room where they can be used most efficiently. Space is needed around the block center. This same space can be used at other times for group gatherings. The art center should be located as near facilities for washing hands as possible. The library or book center should have adequate light and be away from the block traffic. A corner of the room usually serves well for housekeeping equipment.

Space, 35 to 50 square feet per child, is most important. Children cannot do creative work unless they have freedom of movement. Uncluttered space is preferable to a room full of tables and chairs. Children do much work on the floor. What furniture there is should be child size: tables 20, 22, and 24 inches high; chair seats 10, 12, and 14 inches high. The housekeeping furniture (stove, sink, doll bed, tea table and chairs, chest of drawers, rocking chair) must be child size to encourage dramatic play. Some blocks are of the unit type, preferably unit size  $1\frac{3}{8}" \times 2\frac{3}{4}" \times 5\frac{1}{2}"$ , double units  $1\frac{3}{8}" \times 2\frac{3}{4}" \times 11"$ , and quadruple units  $1\frac{3}{8}" \times 2\frac{3}{4}" \times 22"$ . Other shapes such as cylinders, curves, triangles, and small ramps are useful. The transportation toys should be large enough to carry some of the blocks and wooden animals. Also, there should be some hollow blocks, sizes  $5\frac{1}{2}" \times 11" \times 11"$  and  $5\frac{1}{2}" \times 11" \times 22"$ . These bring about more co-operative play. They encourage the use of larger muscles. Supplementary materials such as steering wheel, large ramps, small ladder, oil cans, a hose, and rope are needed to broaden the scope of play.

Music may be used during the free activity period as well as at other times of the day. Musical instruments such as bells of various sizes or drums different in tonal qualities may be available for experimentation. Other instruments that invite manipula-

## SUGGESTIONS FOR ROOM ARRANGEMENT



tion are tonal wood blocks, xylophone, tambourines, triangles. As children experiment, they may form small groups to use the various instruments. Sometimes they may use a record player and records with one or more instruments; again they may ask for piano accompaniment. Also, they may "play" instruments to accompany rhythmic body movement. This is very different from a so-called "rhythm band" arranged by a teacher, "led" by a child, but really controlled by the rhythm pattern chosen by an adult. "Rhythm bands" so used discourage creative music activities. The teacher needs to seek opportunities to guide the use of instruments so that creative music experiences will result.

A record player the children can operate makes possible the choosing of other types of music and listening experiences. Singing is often heard as children paint, draw, work in the house-keeping center. Sometimes the song is picked up by children in other parts of the room.

The art center is usually a busy place, providing opportunities for emotional release and creative expression. Sue's mother required her to keep clean. Covered in an old shirt which served as a painting smock, Sue was having a wonderful time dabbling paint on the large sheets of paper on the easel. "Whew! If Mother could see me now!" she exclaimed. Sue needed this release. Allene had progressed from this stage of manipulation and was painting a picture of her doll, trying to reproduce the colors of hair, eyes, clothes.

Clay and finger paints are not always used at the same time because of the space and tables needed, and the teacher's time. Finger painting requires more of the teacher's attention. Some teachers recommend letting children experiment freely with finger paint on formica top tables. This encourages freedom of movement in using finger, fist, wrist, arm, elbow, without feeling the need of "making a picture." When paper is used, the children wet their own with sponges. They put on the finger paint base, then sprinkle the chosen tempera paint from salt shakers. With material near at hand they do much for themselves and enjoy trying out colors. When paintings are finished, they are placed



where they will dry, perhaps on newspapers spread on the floor or table, or on sliding trays in a rack.

Other art materials available are thick crayons, large drawing paper, colored paper, scraps of cloth, paper, etc. Techniques for working with art materials are given only as the child seems ready to use them. Evaluation of individual work generally takes place during the work period with only the child involved. Work of children is not compared, since abilities and stages of growth vary.

## *Tools for Learning*

These are materials and equipment from which to select as need and purpose suggest.

### INDOOR MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

Hollow blocks—1 dozen  $5\frac{1}{2}'' \times 11'' \times 11''$

2 dozen  $5\frac{1}{2}'' \times 11'' \times 22''$

4 ramps to fit hollow blocks

Unit blocks—complete set for kindergarten—24 different shapes—1000 blocks

Playboards— $\frac{1}{2}$  dozen— $5\frac{1}{2}'' \times 3' \times \frac{3}{4}''$

$\frac{1}{2}$  dozen— $5\frac{1}{2}'' \times 4' \times \frac{3}{4}''$

Add more as you can.

Easels, tempera paint, large bristle brushes ( $\frac{3}{4}''$  or  $1''$  wide), unprinted newsprint paper ( $18'' \times 24''$ ), printed newspaper.

Finger paints (made from a starch base and powdered tempera paint), slick paper as regular finger paint paper, slick butcher paper, shelf paper.

Crayons ( $\frac{1}{2}$ — $1\frac{3}{4}''$  diameter), paper (large sheets  $9'' \times 12''$  and  $18'' \times 24''$ ), manila paper.

Scissors.

Colored construction paper.

Work bench with real tools, not toy ones—hammers,

saws, vises, brace and bit, iron clamp, screw driver.  
Nails of assorted sizes, soft wood.

Housekeeping equipment—dolls, doll clothes, dishes, telephones, child-size sink, tea table, chairs, stove, chest of drawers, doll carriage, broom, dustpan, mop (child size), ironing board that does not easily turn over, iron (child size).

Puzzles—large pieces of wood inlay.

Books—picture books, story books, books of poetry.

Wooden trains, trucks, animals, people.

Bulletin boards for pictures and for children's work.

Plants, aquarium, wire cage, terrarium.

Clay and crock or galvanized garbage pail with lightweight lid, for storage.

Magnets, old clocks, locks, magnifying glass, rulers.

Piano, record player, records.

A few good musical instruments—tom-tom, drums of various sizes, tonal bells, tone block.

### OUTDOOR EQUIPMENT

Climbing apparatus (jungle gym or "climb around" or climbing and horizontal bars)—44" x 14" rounds.

Ladders—54" x 14", range 8" apart, and cleats.

Packing boxes.

Walking boards—8', 10', or 12' lengths x 10" wide x  $\frac{7}{8}$ " or  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " thick, end and center.

\*Slide.

\*See-saw.

\*Swings.

Sand box, buckets, shovels, spoons.

Outdoor blocks— $5\frac{1}{2}$ " x 11" x 22".

Kegs—four—15" high x 12" diameter.

Wheel toys (push trucks, wagons, tricycles, wheelbarrows).

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\* Use these only if space permits. The other equipment listed provides for more dramatic and creative play than the stationary equipment.

Garden tools.

Rope, bucket, balls.

Playboards—1 dozen— $5\frac{1}{2}'' \times 3' \times \frac{3}{4}''$  and  $5\frac{1}{2}'' \times 4' \times \frac{3}{4}''$ .

Large ramps.

Sawhorses—two— $2' \times 12''$  high.

two— $2' \times 16''$  high.

two— $2' \times 20''$  high.

### *Sources for Equipment and Information on Materials*

#### SOURCES

Association for Childhood Education International,  
1200 Fifteenth St., N.W., Washington 5, D. C. Bulletin  
on Equipment and Supplies revised every two years.  
This is a guide for selection of equipment. All equip-  
ment listed has been tested with children.

Atlanta Toy Co., 1000 Nawench Drive, N.W., Atlanta,  
Ga.

Community Playthings, Rifton, N. Y.

Creative Playthings, 5 University Place, New York 3,  
N. Y.

Education Equipment Co., 69 W. 23rd St., New York,  
N. Y.

Grandad's Toy Shop, Inc., North Thetford, Vermont.

Seaver, Loren A., 3050 N. Lima St., Burbank, Cal.

#### HELPFUL HINTS

Clear commercial starch sprinkled with powdered paint  
can be used for finger painting.

Man's shirt makes a good apron for painting.

A long piece of flat soak hose is enjoyed when playing  
fireman.

Old silk scarfs, yard lengths of colored cloth, inspire  
ideas in rhythmic play.

## FINGER PAINT

8 cubes starch

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup cold water

Add enough boiling water to make a thick mixture; stir.

Cook until clear—don't get too thick.

Can use soap flakes with mixture.  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of pure soap flakes added just before taking off stove will improve the mixture. Paint on clothes will wash out more easily when soap flakes are used.

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup talcum powder—optional.

Tempera paint is added to the basic mixture to give the desired color.

## FLOUR PASTE

1 cup boiling water

1 tbsp. powdered alum

1 pt. cold water

1 pt. flour

1 tsp. oil of cloves

Add powdered alum to boiling water.

Mix flour and cold water until smooth.

Pour mixture into boiling alum water.

Cook until it has bluish cast, stirring all the time.

Remove from fire, add oil of cloves, and stir well.

Keep in air-tight jars.

## DOUGH FOR MODELING

1 cup flour

1 cup salt

1 tsp. powdered alum

About  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup of water. Add a little at a time until dough is of right consistency.

Coloring—tempera powdered paint or food coloring added to water used.



Can be stored in refrigerator. May need to add a little water after being stored.

A tablespoon of salad oil added will give a different texture.

### *Some Experiences in Work and Play*

Joe and David built a track and a bridge of blocks in one part of the room. Penn, Hank, and Charles did the same type of building across the room. As Joe's track came close to the other one, Hank said, "That's right, Joe. Put it there." The two tracks were joined and co-operative play between the two groups began. A wagon was left in the space enclosed by tracks. David raised the bridge to get the wagon out of the enclosure. "Oh, a drawbridge!" exclaimed Penn. Another innovation in the play.

*Boat Play.* Hollow blocks outlined the boat. Chairs were placed inside. A board served as gangplank. Sometimes just the process of building provides enough interest, but on this day the boat itself stimulated some good play, pulling together those interested in home life and those in building.

"All aboard," shouted Bucky.

Jimmy: "Wait. I've got to get the people on board." Some got on. "We need two more people. Judy, do you want to ride on the boat? A boat goes any place."

Alice, Judy, and Ann fixed a lunch in the housekeeping center and took it on the boat. Ann took the baby.

On the boat. Alice: "I'll take a glass of milk to the sofa." Blocks served as glasses of milk.

Ann: "No, you'll spill it."

Alice: "No, I'm big enough not to spill milk."

Bucky: "It's night. I've got to turn on the lights."

"New York," called one of the crew. The gangplank was lowered. Some passengers got off; others stayed on for Boston.

*Churning.* When the teacher had finished reading *Snipp, Snapp, Snurr, and the Buttered Bread* to a group, someone asked, "How did she get up the butter?" This question was discussed at

the time. The next day the teacher brought a pint of cream in a glass mayonnaise churn. When the cream had turned, the children took turns churning. They could see the yellow dots of butter appear. The butter was gathered, washed, salted, and shaped into a cake. That day a few children made bread and butter sandwiches for lunch. No butter was ever more enjoyed. Later, a large churn and milk were used.

*Conversation.* There was a constant stream of talk as Jean, Ann, and Tony were playing picnic. They had brought dishes in a basket, rolled the dollbabies in carriages, and found a place away from the housekeeping center.

"I'm putting the babies in the chair. They have to sit together."

"See, this is the big baby, so she sits in the big chair. The big doll is the mother of this little doll."

"We're having a picnic. Now we've got to get fixed."

"I am going to be the big sister and you be the big brother."

"Now you've got to share your milk with the baby. This is the baby's bottle."

Tony: "I am going home and eat dinner."

"Where is he gone?"

"Oh, he's going home to eat his dinner."

"Get the dish rags off the table."

"Do you have to feed the baby?"

"No, that's the ice cream."

"Now give me the cake."

"Jean, can I take your baby back?"

"No, carry the lunch, dear."

"Now put the things up."

"Now let's go home, dears. Ann, you carry the baby."

*Number Concepts.* A vegetable garden was planned early in the spring at one kindergarten. Seeds that would mature early were bought at the neighborhood grocery store and planted—radish, lettuce, turnip, parsley. Under the guidance of the teacher, groups of children had the responsibility for planting, weeding, and keeping the garden watered. When any vegetable was ready

for eating, the children were proud and happy. On May Day, a basket of fresh garden produce was arranged and taken to the principal of the school. One day some lettuce was to be used in sandwiches for lunch. A few children went with an assistant teacher to the grocery store to buy bread and mayonnaise. The grocer, who was a friend of theirs, asked what they were going to do with their garden parsley, now that school would soon be out for the summer. "If you'd like to sell it, you can bring it to me tied in small bunches." The children on the shopping errand went back and excitedly told the teacher and the other children what the grocer had said. When asked if they'd like to sell the parsley, the answer was, "Yes!" The next morning a group had the responsibility of picking the parsley, counting out the sprigs, and tying them into small bunches. The bunches were then taken to the store. The grocer paid them two dollars for the parsley. By agreement the money was spent at the same grocery store for supplies for a picnic lunch.

*Trips: Visit to the Library.* A new branch of the city library was constructed across the street from the kindergarten. This aroused much interest in how men worked, how buildings were erected. Watching the progress of the work was a popular occupation. This influence was noticed in block building and play. When the library was opened to the public, the teacher made an appointment with the librarian to visit when she could show the children the building. They took a pot of geraniums as a gift. After looking around, each child was responsible for choosing one book to take back to kindergarten. These were checked out in the name of the school. Later, the librarian visited the kindergarten and told stories to the group.

*Off to the Farm.* Lawson's grandfather invited the kindergarten children to visit his farm. Notes were sent home asking the parents if the children might have permission to go. The drive of twenty miles each way made it necessary to plan to take a full kindergarten day for the trip, an unusual procedure. The lunch each child brought was a high point of the plans. Many felt important as they started off with school lunches just as their big brothers

and sisters often did. There were mothers to help and enough cars so that five children and two adults rode in each car. One adult in a car was given several books with pictures and stories about farm life. These were to be used when the children tired of looking and talking of what they saw and became restless. Climbing fences and running across pastures were welcome after the ride. Lawson's father was at the farm to show the cows, pigs, sheep. The children climbed into the hayloft. Charles was thrilled when he found an egg a hen had laid in the hay.

A tub of honey had just been taken from a post where bees had made a hive. The children had never seen so much honey. It seemed to taste better than the honey they had at home.

At lunch time, tables were placed on the big screened porch. Each child found a place at a table and opened his own lunch bag. Lawson's mother provided the lemonade. "Thank you, God," was said for food, for good times, and for people who help.

The trip back was timed so as to reach kindergarten just in time for dismissal. For many days afterward the children enjoyed talking of their experience. Farm play took on new interest.

*Walks Nearby.* The neighborhood affords many places of interest. Sometimes exciting things are found in just a walk around the block. The children may come back with different kinds of leaves, with acorns of various shapes and sizes, with dandelions. Perhaps they notice new kinds of trucks.

One day children watched some students from an art museum drawing the church. Tom looked at the student, at his charcoal sticks, at his drawing, then up at the church tower which was being sketched. "Pretty good," he said, as he walked on.

Flower gardens in the neighborhood may provide many happy and satisfying experiences. If there happens to be a stream nearby, tadpoles may be caught and taken back to the kindergarten for observation.

Sometimes a fire station is within easy walking distance. Before visiting there, permission should be secured from the firemen. In preparation for the visit, the children might be encouraged to think of what they want to find out. At the fire station,



definite directions must be given concerning what the children must do in case of a fire alarm involving that station's equipment.

Children walk along the street in a natural way, not in lines or with partners assigned by the teacher. Small groupings change as interests develop. Rules are made before trips are taken. "We all stay together. No one runs ahead. If you get interested and forget for a minute, stop and wait for us." "Everyone stops at the street corner until we are all ready to cross." "We look carefully before we cross the street. When all is clear, we walk across together." "Watch for other people. We must not take up all the sidewalk. We keep to the right." The teacher needs to designate the right as toward the street or toward the houses, depending on which direction they are going at the moment. "We talk quietly as we walk." "Everyone carries and is responsible for what he finds and for his own wraps." If the child takes off his sweater, he must take care of it himself.

*A Visit.* Allison had said to the other children, "Come and see my kittens." His home was just three blocks from the school. The teacher explained to him that the visit would have to wait until it was convenient for his mother. Soon the invitation came from his mother, and he and the other children were delighted. At the appointed time they walked to Allison's home. They saw the kittens, played in Allison's swings and with his ball. Allison played his favorite record, "Bozo and the Circus." His mother served fruit juice and cookies on the porch. That was lunch for the morning. When the children got back to kindergarten, they were ready for rest.

*A Trolley Ride.* Since kindergarten children travel mostly in automobiles, a trolley ride is a great event. Each child brought two dimes (fare for school children) for the trip of three miles to the end of the line, and back again. Before leaving school, they discussed how to wait for a trolley, the need of standing in line to get on, where to put the dime, how to walk into the trolley and sit down, the need to stay in one's seat. Since the trolley waited at the end of the line about ten minutes, the teacher took along ice cream cups for lunch. The motorman shared in the lunch

during the wait. On the return trip, each child put in the pay machine the other dime which the teacher had kept for him. When the trolley reached the corner near the school, the children took turns in getting off, then waited on the sidewalk until all were ready to cross the street and go into the school.

Often stories are written after trips, the sentences dictated by the children. These might go into a book, "Our Kindergarten Year." The number and types of trips each year are determined by the development of the children, their need for such trips, the availability of places in the community, and other phases of the curriculum.

*Clay.* Peter, John, Jeff, Sue, Katy, and Joan were working with pottery clay, each according to his or her own stage of growth. No one was told what to make. Peter and John rolled theirs into snakes, tried to see how many they could make and how long each snake could be. Sue patted her clay into thin cakes. Jeff made something that looked to him like a rabbit, then worked with it until all could identify it. He was so pleased with it that as he was smoothing and finishing it, he said, "I'll make a rabbit for my mother, one for my daddy, one for my brother. Goodness! That's a lot of rabbits. I'll just keep this one for myself." Katy and Joan each rolled the clay into a big ball, stuck their fingers in, stretched out their clay and made crude bowls. When clean-up time came, there was the question of which clay pieces were ready to save. It was decided that it had been fun to make snakes and probably would be again, but it would be wasting clay to keep those snakes as they were. Sue's cakes were so thin that they would break when they were dry. They had tested a thin cake before and found that it cracked and crumbled. Jeff's rabbit looked as if it would hold its shape when dry. Katy and Joan had bowls with thick enough rims to hold. The bowls and the rabbit were placed on cardboard, each piece bearing the name of its owner. The rest of the clay was rolled into balls, moistened, and put back into the clay jar to be used again. Although not every child had something to save, each one had a satisfying experience.

*Music.* The teacher was seated at the piano. The children were close by on the rug. Miss Jones said, "Mary, when you were on the playground, I saw you having fun doing a high skip. Can you show us how you skipped?" As Mary skipped around the room, Miss Jones fitted the music to Mary's movements. "I can skip another way," said Jane. One child after another tried out various ways of skipping. Each time Miss Jones fitted her playing to the tempo and mood of the skipper. "I can walk in big steps," said John. As John began walking, the teacher caught his rhythm in her playing. Various movements such as hopping, running, jumping, were introduced by the children. After they had tried out their ideas, Miss Jones said, "I found some music I think you'll like." When she had played this music, Sue said, "I can do something to that. To some of it, I can whirl around." The children had a good time interpreting the music in different ways.

Miss Ray cannot play the piano as well as Miss Jones. She and her group of children often use the drum for various rhythms, such as walking, running, rolling. Sometimes they interpret music played from records. With a little encouragement children delight in trying out various body movements. Even though she is not an accomplished musician, a creative teacher will find ways to help children express themselves through music.

### *Is Reading Taught in the Kindergarten?*

If a child is not pushed into a reading program, he will learn more quickly when he is ready and will get a greater sense of accomplishment and joy. Close work, such as coloring within lines, trying to recognize letters and words, and writing demand too much of a four- or five-year-old. These activities call for too concentrated use of eyes and small muscles. They have no real meaning to the child. Workbooks do not meet his fundamental needs. Our purpose in kindergarten is to help each child to live as rich a life as possible. Thus, the child continues to grow and to be ready for future learnings to come. Through many varied experiences he increases his vocabulary; learns to communicate,

to love books, to notice likenesses and differences; builds self-confidence; meets success. All of these factors prepare the way for later learning to read when he is more mature.

## *Children and Books*

Experiences with books are part of the daily program in a good kindergarten. These experiences, like other types of activities, should be guided, not just resorted to when there seems nothing else to do. Books, stories, and poems wisely chosen and rightly used strengthen a child in his task of growing. They help him in his need for security, for belonging to the group, for release of emotional tensions. Books increase his power to communicate. Being able to use and understand words is important.

*Kinds of Books.* Children need many kinds of books—small, large, inexpensive, selected books; more expensive special books; stories of animals, of realism, of fantasy, of fun, of people; books of rhymes and poetry; religious books, chosen very carefully. Books for the pre-school child should include good clear pictures, preferably colored pictures. The pictures and the text should go along together. Stories such as *Billy Goats Gruff* and *Gingerbread Boy*, containing repetition, are popular. Word sounds and word sensations, such as are found in the *Noisy Books* by Margaret Wise Brown, fascinate most children. Humor in a book for young children must be within the child's understanding, as in *Make Way for Ducklings* by Robert McCloskey and *Caps for Sale* by Esphyr Slobodkina. Stories containing frightening elements should be avoided until the child develops feelings of greater security.

Children enjoy listening to stories told to them. The storyteller must like and know the story well. She needs to speak distinctly in a pleasing voice. Before telling a story, the children should be seated comfortably where all can see the storyteller's face. If the teacher reads from a book, she must know the story so well that she merely glances at the printed page as she reads.



The book should never make a barrier between her and the children.

*Use of Books.* The child's interest in using books can be encouraged through a good library center. A book rack or adequate shelves will help in displaying books. Table space where children can handle books without being crowded is needed. Comfortable chairs encourage "reading." Children will also enjoy sitting on a rug, looking at books with each other. Two children will often tell each other the story by following the pictures. Books in the library center should be changed once a week, perhaps keeping out a few favorites of the past week, adding additional ones. Variety is essential to meet many interests. Seasons and topics of immediate interest will influence the selection. Children enjoy books more when they know how to handle them properly. Some need help in knowing the front and back of the book, where to begin in looking through the book, how to turn the pages without tearing them. Care of books is important. As soon as a book shows wear, it should be removed from the shelf and mended before it is put into use again. Mystic tape will strengthen or mend bindings. Look for little tears inside and mend with Scotch tape.

*How to Get Books.* None of us can buy all the books we need or want. We should purchase special books that will be used many times during the year. In most communities, the public library provides special services to schools. The teacher can check out a number of books and can keep them four weeks. This provides a greater variety of books than any one school can afford to own. Occasional visits to the library by the kindergarten group stimulates interest in books. If library services are not available through a community library or a bookmobile, perhaps the parents' group will contribute books the teacher requests.

*Rhymes, Poetry.* Very early in life the child is charmed with the rhythm and flow of verse. Mother Goose rhymes are enjoyed long before the words themselves are understood. In kindergarten we continue to enjoy *Mother Goose*. The wise teacher has in her collection many poems about the things of interest to children and presents them at the right moment. On a walk perhaps a

woodpecker is seen. This would be a good time for the following poem:

"The woodpecker pecked out a little round hole  
And made him a house in the telephone pole.

"One day when I watched he poked out his head,  
And he had on a hood and a collar of red.

"When the streams of rain pour out of the sky,  
And the sparkles of lightning go flashing by,

"And the big, big wheels of thunder roll,  
He can snuggle back in the telephone pole."<sup>8</sup>

Children will continue to be interested in poetry if the teacher is interested and will share the right verses with them.

*Religious Books.* It is extremely hard to find suitable religious books for young children. Because of his limited experience the preschool child cannot understand many of the Bible story books. Some books and stories, such as those about nature, living and playing together, doing things for others, not usually thought of as religious, lead to religious experiences.

*Selection of Books.* There are many good books now for children, and new ones are always coming. Teachers should be aware of the new books as well as of the older ones. The children's librarian in the community is a good person to consult. In this chapter and the following one there are selected lists of children's books. At the end of this chapter there are listed some resource books and pamphlets for teachers.

## CHILDREN'S BOOKS

(Favorite books other than those listed in Chapter V)

*A Book About God*, Florence M. Fitch. New York: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Co., Inc., 1953.

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8. "The Woodpecker," from *Under the Tree* by Elizabeth Madox Roberts. Copyright 1922 by B. W. Huebsch, Inc., 1950 by Ivor S. Roberts. Reprinted by permission of The Viking Press, Inc.

- Angus and the Ducks*, Marjorie Flack. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Doran and Co., 1930.
- Big Talk*, Miriam Schlein. New York: William R. Scott, Inc., 1955.
- Billy and Blaze*, Clarence W. Anderson. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1946.
- Boo, Who Used to Be Scared of the Dark*, Munro Leaf. New York: Random House, Inc., 1948.
- Caps for Sale*, Esphyr Slobodkina. New York: William R. Scott, Inc., 1947.
- Choo Choo; the Story of a Little Engine Who Ran Away*, Virginia Lee Burton. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1937.
- The City Noisy Book*, Margaret Wise Brown. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1939.
- The Country Noisy Book*, Margaret Wise Brown. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1940.
- Curious George*, Hans A. Rey. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1941.
- Everybody Has a House*, Mary McBurney Green. New York: William R. Scott, Inc., 1944.
- Everything Is Somewhere*, Vasiliu. New York: John Day Co., 1959.
- Fix It, Please*, Lucy Sprague Mitchell. New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1947.
- God Gave Us Seasons*, Carolyn Muller Wolcott. Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1958.
- God Planned It That Way*, Carolyn Edna Muller. Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1952.
- Hands, Hands, Hands*, Harriet Van Meter. Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1958.
- The Indoor Noisy Book*, Margaret Wise Brown. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1942.
- In the Forest*, Marie Hall Ets. New York: The Viking Press, 1944.
- Is It Hard? Is It Easy?* Mary McBurney Green. New York: William R. Scott, Inc., 1948.
- Journey Cake, Ho!* Ruth Sawyer. New York: The Viking Press, Inc., 1953.
- Let's Go Outdoors*, Harriet E. Huntington. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1939.
- Let's Go to the Seashore*, Harriet E. Huntington. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1941.
- Little Lost Lamb*, Golden MacDonald. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1945.
- Little Toot*, Hardie Gramatky. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1939.
- Make Way for Ducklings*, Robert McCloskey. New York: The Viking Press, Inc., 1941.
- Martin and Judy Story Books*, Vols. 1, 2, 3, Verna Hills. Boston: Beacon Press, 1939, 1940, 1943.
- Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel*, Virginia Lee Burton. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1939.

- The Noisy Book*, Margaret Wise Brown. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1939.
- Off to Bed*, Maud and Miska Petersham. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1954.
- Red Light, Green Light*, Golden MacDonald. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1944.
- Round About Me*, Elizabeth B. Jones. Anderson, Ind.: The Warner Press, 1953.
- Small One*, Zhenya Gay. New York: The Viking Press, 1958.
- Snipp, Snapp, Snurr, and the Buttered Bread*, Maj. Jan Lindman. Chicago: Albert Whitman and Co., 1934.
- Snipp, Snapp, Snurr, and the Gingerbread*, Maj. Jan Lindman. Chicago: Albert Whitman and Co., 1936.
- Snipp, Snapp, Snurr, and the Red Shoes*, Maj. Jan Lindman. Chicago: Albert Whitman and Co., 1936.
- The Storm Book*, Charlotte Zolotow. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952.
- The Story About Ping*, Marjorie Flack. New York: The Viking Press, Inc., 1933.
- Tale of Peter Rabbit*, Beatrix Potter. New York: Frederick Warne and Co., Inc., 1904.
- Timid Timothy*, Gweneira Williams. New York: William R. Scott, Inc., 1958.
- The True Book of Policemen and Firemen*, Opal Miner. Chicago: Childrens Press, 1954.
- Turtles*, Wilfred S. Bronson. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., Inc., 1945.
- The Very Little Girl*, Phyllis Krasilovsky. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1953.
- Wait for William*, Marjorie Flack. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1935.
- The Wet World*, Norma Simon. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1954.
- When You Were a Little Baby*, Rhoda Berman. New York: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Co., 1954.
- Where's Andy?* Jane Thayer. New York: William Morrow and Co., Inc., 1954.
- Who Lives in This House?* Glenn O. Blough. New York: Whittlesey House, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1957.

### COLLECTIONS OF POEMS

- A Child's Garden of Verses*, Robert Louis Stevenson. Editions:
- Illustrated by Alexander Dobkin. Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1946.
- Illustrated by Alice and Martin Provensen. New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1951.
- Illustrated by Tasha Tudor. New York: Oxford University Press, 1947.
- A Small Child's Book of Verse*, Pelagie Doane. New York: Oxford University Press, 1948.



- Book of Nursery and Mother Goose Rhymes*, compiled by Marguerite De Angeli. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1954.
- Silver Pennies*, Blanche J. Thompson. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1925.
- Time for Poetry*, May Hill Arbuthnot. Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1952.
- Sung Under the Silver Umbrella*, Association for Childhood Education International. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1935.
- Very Young Verses*, Barbara P. Geismer and Antoinette B. Suter. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1945.

## *Suggested Program*

The kindergarten program must be flexible. However, the teacher needs to plan within large blocks of time. This helps to build good work habits, yet allows for changes when needed. One teacher finds this approximate schedule desirable:

9:00— 9:45	Work and Play Activities
9:45—10:00	Cleaning Up
10:00—10:15	Group Experiences—Conversation, Special Story
10:15—10:45	Toileting—Lunch—Rest
10:45—11:15	Outdoor Play
11:15—11:40	Group Experiences—Music, Dramatization
11:40—12:00	Story Time, Getting Ready to Go Home
12:00	Dismissal

If children must stay later because of mothers at work, it will be necessary to serve a hot lunch around twelve o'clock. After lunch a long period for sleep on cots should be provided. This sleep should be followed by play outdoors whenever possible. When weather does not permit outdoor play, informal play indoors, music, and stories may be enjoyed.

When children first come in the morning, the teacher greets them individually, tries to listen to those who want to talk. At this time she makes an informal health inspection. The child who has a cold is kept away from others until he can be sent home. Each child gets busy on the job of his own choosing. Some

children need guidance in this. As she sees the need, the teacher helps small groups and individuals with their planning and evaluation of their work. Sometimes during this period the teacher checks an attendance list on the bulletin board. No roll is called.

Although the work and play period is informal, it is only through careful planning and a well-organized set-up that this type of purposeful activity can be accomplished. The children must learn good work habits, such as getting their own materials whenever possible, putting away materials, taking care of them, being responsible for their own work. During the year they become more independent and are better able to help each other.

### GROUP EXPERIENCES—CONVERSATION, SPECIAL STORY

In this period, conversation is guided toward some special thought that will help in religious living. The teacher takes advantage of opportunities to help the child in this way all through the day. Worship and prayer may come at any time and anywhere, whenever the right moment arrives. However, there should be a time when effort is made to focus the interests and attention of the group on some special thought. It may be to talk of things of nature, of children playing happily together. Telling a Bible story or a story emphasizing a Bible truth may be appropriate. Conversation with the children may lead to the desire to express thanks to God. The use of this time will vary according to the special interests and the experiences the children are having during the day, and will depend upon the sensitivity and understanding of the teacher.

### TOILETING—LUNCH—REST

Before the light lunch of fruit juice or milk, children need to go to the toilet and to wash their hands. It is well to have committees of children set the tables and serve as much of the lunch as possible. After lunch, children are encouraged to rest. When

they can do so without getting cold, it is good to have them relax on cots or rugs. If this cannot be planned, a quiet time of listening to music or a story can help to balance the program, allowing for quiet as well as more active periods.

### OUTDOOR PLAY

The outdoor period should encourage vigorous play. Children need space for running. They need to climb, to ride tricycles, use wagons, play in the sand pile. Walking boards, hollow blocks, and planks add to imaginative and satisfying play.

### GROUP EXPERIENCES—MUSIC, DRAMATIZATION

Comparatively short periods of time are allowed for experiences of the entire group together. During other periods children work and play alone or with changing groups. Four- and five-year-olds cannot concentrate long in a group or do much group planning. For short spaces of time, children enjoy singing together, experimenting with rhythm activities, playing out stories they know.

### *Not All Days Are Good Ones*

The good or bad day is a relative one. It must be considered in the light of other days, of the children at their particular stages of growth, of the needs of individuals and of the group. What happens each day is influenced by what has gone before and will influence the days to come. Some days seem to go smoothly, some to present more problems. How we handle each affects the total program.

This, a not so good day, was the third rainy one of the week. The children seemed noisy at their work, when putting away toys and materials, and when going to the toilet. In fact, they were noisy as they arrived at school. It was hard for them to settle down.

One car group was late. All the children in the group were upset, most of them because their worktime was shortened. Tony, who caused the difficulty, was upset too, but not because he was late and had made the others late. He was showing the result of tension at home. His mother nagged because he wouldn't get dressed in the morning. She threatened to keep him at home because he wouldn't eat his breakfast. When he came into kindergarten he started to play with a truck, but he kept bumping into buildings others were trying to construct. He was quite disagreeable. The teacher was delighted when he took the suggestion to use clay. Here he worked out some of the tensions. When worktime was over he seemed more comfortable and in a better humor.

Three children spilled juice at lunch. They had improved in handling the juice, but this seemed the day for accidents. Sue, who had been coming to kindergarten for only a few weeks, got lonesome for her mother. She had had difficulty in making the separation from her mother when she first came. For several days her mother brought her sewing and sat in the hall so that Sue could see her and talk to her when necessary. Sue had been happy without her for a whole week now. Today she really needed her, so Mrs. Hunter had to come to be close at hand.

What was the trouble with everybody? Outdoor play had been missed for several days. Rainy days brought more difficult situations in coming to school, in taking care of extra clothes which were not easy to handle. There was a greater rush at home. The children seemed clumsy in their movements. Could any of this have been helped?

Perhaps the teacher expected too much after days without outdoor play. She, too, might not have been up to par. Noise bothered her more than usual. When she looked for good happenings, things seemed to smooth out a bit. A laugh with Tim over a story he was painting helped.

The experience with a group of children at the window watching the rain was a high point. Together they watched the raindrops bounce off the pavement. They listened as the rain fell. Together they said a poem about the rain:



"Raining, raining,  
All night long;  
Sometimes loud, sometimes soft,  
Just like a song.

"There'll be rivers in the gutters  
And lakes along the street.  
It will make our lazy kitty  
Wash his little dirty feet.

"The roses will wear diamonds  
Like kings and queens at court;  
But the pansies all get muddy  
Because they are so short.

"I'll sail my boat tomorrow  
In wonderful new places,  
But first I'll take my watering-pot  
And wash the pansies' faces."<sup>9</sup>

Julia suggested singing a rain song. The singing attracted several other children who joined in. Jim said, "I bet our tulip bulbs we planted are glad God is sending the rain." The teacher talked to God: "God, we've had a good time watching the rain, seeing the raindrops bounce. Thank You for watering the tulip bulbs we planted."

By the time the children went home, everyone was more relaxed. It wasn't as bad a day as it appeared on the surface. The adults were more tired than usual, though, when the last car left. What can the kindergarten teacher do to lessen unhappy experiences in such a kindergarten day? She needs to begin with herself. When legitimate noise, noise of busyness, bothers her too much, she needs to relax, to look for something good happening, to find a bit of humor. Or maybe she needs to get out of the room for a

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9. "Rain in the Night," from *Selected Lyrics* by Amelia Josephine Burr. Copyright 1927 by George H. Doran Co. Reprinted by permission of the author, Amelia J. B. Elmore.

moment and make a fresh start. Above all, she needs to be calm, to keep her voice soft, to refrain from talking too much.

Perhaps on this rainy day a new medium of work was needed—water play, blowing bubbles, or sailing boats. Flour and salt dough of pastel shades might have brought a new challenge to some. A story early in the day might have set a different stage. A change of plans, special preparations, are often needed for days that are hard for children.

### *Guidance Reminders*

1. The arrangement of the kindergarten room affects what happens to children there. Is the room informal and homelike? Is the equipment such that it seems to say, "Come, use me"? Is this equipment so arranged as to separate activities that might interfere with other activities? For instance, space is needed around the place where blocks are stored. This space should not be too near the housekeeping center, the easels, or the books. Jim was building a train track near the housekeeping center, obstructing the entrance, complicating the going and coming into the home. Mary said to him, "I don't like people building in my yard." The room arrangement can help guide children in their activities.

2. Friendly, informal greetings as children arrive, calling each child by name, help to make children feel that they are recognized as persons. Be ready to listen. When a child first comes he is eager to tell something of importance to him. He needs also to get busy right away. Waiting for things to begin is hard on him.

3. As children go to work and play of their own choosing, stay in the background as much as possible. Be ready to help if needed, but also ready to let the child be as independent as possible.

4. Have and show genuine interest in children and what they do. Let them know you care about them and how they feel about things. Keep the door open for them to communicate whatever is important to them.

5. Be positive with children. Avoid the negative approach.

When you need to give directions or suggestions to a child or a group, be sure you get his or their attention. Speak to the individual by name, give the directions in as few words as possible, expect them to be followed. If suggestions allowing for choice are given, honor the child's decisions. Discriminate between suggestions that allow for choice and directions that must be carried out.

6. Watch for places where trouble may arise, as in use of carpentry tools or blocks, when certain children play together, when an individual is having trouble with himself. Many times trouble can be avoided if the teacher is on the alert.

7. Allow for differences in children, in their reactions, behavior, and abilities. Don't expect all of them to be interested in doing the same things or in working or listening for the same length of time.

### RESOURCE BOOKS

- Art Education in the Kindergarten*, Charles D. and Margaret Gaitskell. Peoria, Ill.: Charles A. Bennett, 1952.
- Children and Books*, May Hill Arbuthnot. Chicago: Scott, Foresman & Co., 1957.
- Creative and Mental Growth*, Viktor Lowenfeld. New York: The Macmillan Co., Third Edition, 1957.
- Teachers Guide to Education in Early Childhood*, Chapters VI, VII, XIII, XIV, XVI, XVIII, XIX. Compiled by Bureau of Elementary Education, California State Department of Education, Sacramento, California, 1956.
- Living in the Kindergarten*, Chapters IV—XVI, Clarice Wills and William H. Stegeman. Chicago: Follett Publishing Co., 1951, revised 1956.
- Teaching the Kindergarten Child*, Hazel M. Lambert. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., Inc., 1958.
- The Church Kindergarten*, Polly Hargis Dillard. Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1958.
- Understanding Children's Play*, Ruth E. Hartley and others. New York: Columbia University Press, 1952.
- Young Minds Need Something to Grow On*, Muriel Ward. Evanston, Ill.: Row, Peterson and Co., 1957.
- Your Child and His Art*, Viktor Lowenfeld. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1954.
- Your Child's Reading Today*, Josette Frank. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1954.

## BULLETINS

"Growing Up With Books." Library Journal, 62 W. 45th St., New York, N. Y.  
 "The Horn Book." The Horn Book, Inc., Boston, Mass. (Published six times a year.)

From the Association for Childhood Education International, 1200 Fifteenth St., N.W., Washington 5, D. C.

"Art for Children's Growing"—No. 64.

"Bibliography of Books for Children"—compiled every two years.

"Children's Books for \$1.25 or Less"—compiled every two years.

"Creating with Materials for Work and Play"—No. 5.

"Discipline"—No. 99.

"Equipment and Supplies"—No. 39—revised every two years.

"Kindergarten Teachers' Portfolio"—No. 2.

"Music for Children's Living"—No. 96.

"Science for Children and Teachers"—No. 91.

From the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., 120 East 23rd St., New York 10, N. Y.

"Goals for the Christian Education of Children," 1945.

## MUSIC BOOKS

*American Folk Songs for Children*, Ruth Crawford Seegar. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1948.

*Another Singing Time*, Satis N. Coleman and Alice G. Thorn. New York: John Day Co., Inc., 1937.

*More Songs to Grow On*, Beatrice Landeck. New York: Edward B. Marks Music Corp., 1954.

*Singing Time*, Satis N. Coleman and Alice G. Thorn. New York: John Day Co., Inc., 1930.

*Songs for Early Childhood*, edited by W. Lawrence Curry and others. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958.

*Songs for the Nursery School*, Laura P. MacCarteney. Cincinnati: The Willis Music Co., 1934.

*When the Little Child Wants to Sing*, edited by Calvin W. Laufer. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1935.

*Worship and Conduct Songs*, Elizabeth McE. Shields. Richmond, Va.: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1929.



## *Curriculum Continued— Seasons and Special Days*

### *Planning Related Experiences*

The changing seasons and special days offer a wealth of opportunities for enriching the kindergarten curriculum. The child's horizon is expanding. He is becoming aware of seasons, not the length of time of each, but of fall, winter, spring, summer, following in sequence. He probably remembers some experience of Christmas, seeing a jack-o-lantern, receiving a valentine, freedom from heavy winter clothes in the spring. Certainly he remembers a birthday celebration. All of these occasions take on new meanings as his world is enlarged. It is most important for the teacher to remember that the child takes only those learnings from each experience that have some vital meaning for him. Directed work in the kindergarten, be it coloring leaves, cutting out a traced valentine, making a Christmas calendar, does not lead a child into creative activities. For special days we follow the usual plan of basing experiences on the goals for the whole year and on the interests and purposes of the individuals. Not everyone in the group accepts special occasions in the same way, nor does each child make the same things if he is encouraged to choose his work. One hears, "The children love it"; "The parents want them to bring home attractive (to adults) handwork." Children will like it better if they are free to do their own planning and thinking with guidance, and they will grow in the process. Give them a chance. If

parents know real guidance is going on, if they are helped to observe the child's growth, if they understand why the program is built on the child's interest and stage of development, they will not want adult-planned and perhaps "touched up" work. The teacher must champion good learning experiences for children. She needs to help parents understand the program and the reasons underlying it and seek their interest and co-operation.

The environment of the room influences the reaction of children to new experiences. For each season, each special day, there are changes in pictures, colors (such as browns and reds in fall, orange and black at Halloween, red and green at Christmas, red and white at Valentine, yellow and light green in spring), objects (such as fall leaves, nuts, pumpkins, corn, evergreens, seeds, spring flowers), trips (as outdoors to find nuts and leaves, to the grocery store or farm for a pumpkin, to the corner lot or woods for a Christmas tree, to the yard for planting a garden). The projects each year are different, for each year presents other circumstances. Each group of children varies. Even though the general interests fall along similar lines, the teacher must not have her plans so firmly made that she is not sensitive to the reaction of the children to the occasion and does not follow their leads.

She will have on hand appropriate pictures, books, and stories suited to the particular season or holiday interest, music for songs and rhythmic activities. She will explore the community in which she teaches to find where desirable materials and objects can be obtained. Her purpose is not to produce finished handwork nor a program to please adults, nor to give children merely a happy time, important as that is, but to enrich the child's living, guide the changes in his attitudes and behavior through the experiences that special days and seasons offer.

## *Fall*

The bright crisp days of fall bring keen delight in the outdoors. The vivid coloring of leaves in many sections of the country adds enthusiasm for creativity. This is a time to be aware of the

exciting work of nature—squirrels preparing for winter, trees shedding their leaves and already showing tiny leaf buds for spring, berries turning orange and red, birds migrating. In warmer climates, there are also changes to be noted. All of these and many more give opportunities to wonder, to reach out to God.

More time is usually spent indoors during the late fall and winter. This brings a different pattern of living. Putting on heavier wearing apparel creates an interest in textures and kinds of cloth. In colder climates new skills come in managing leggings, zippers, galoshes. Shoes are heavier than in summer.

Some of the particular interests may be:

Noticing shape and color of various leaves, learning the names of a few trees nearby.

Hunting nuts and acorns.

Noting fall fruits.

Bringing in many kinds of seeds, noticing how seeds travel. A seed chart might be made.

Feeding and watching birds, talking of the migration of birds.

Finding out about squirrels and chipmunks if they are near at hand.

Noticing shorter days and longer nights.

Finding dew on the grass in the mornings.

Feeling the chill of the early morning air.

Feeling the warmth of the sun's rays in the middle of the day, even though the air might be cool.

Making apple sauce.

The children are encouraged to bring nature treasures they find at home, on a trip, around the school. These become more meaningful as they talk about them with other children, find pictures of them in books. The materials on the nature table change in relationship to the seasons and according to interests of the children in the group.

One fall, children in a kindergarten began bringing in dif-

ferent kinds of seeds—small ones such as morning glory seeds, larger seeds such as dried butterbeans, big seeds like that of the avocado. On walks around the school, other seeds and seed pods were found. The teacher and children began to note how seeds travel. Some, such as those of the dandelion, are blown by the wind. Others, like acorns, roll. Some, such as cockleburrs, stick on clothing and are carried by people and animals. Seeds, as peas and corn, are eaten. Book such as *Travelers All* were often used. Over and over the idea of God and His plan was introduced in a natural way to a child or a group at the nature center or as children found seeds on walks. As interest developed in the wonder of God's plan for seeds, the teacher quietly said, "Thank You, God, for planning for seeds." Some seeds, such as those from the Halloween pumpkin and from the ears of corn brought for decoration at Thanksgiving time, were stored until they could be planted in the spring. Such seasonal activities widen understanding and lead to meaningful worship.

Action play of ideas, songs, and stories is influenced by the season and the immediate experiences of the children. If they live where leaves fall in the autumn, children will enjoy action stories and songs of walking through the leaves, raking them into a big pile, jumping over and even into the pile. They will like to imitate squirrels finding nuts, burying them in the ground. They might play taking a walk on a cool day, jumping over a brook, finding pretty stones or moss, getting warm and taking off sweaters, coming home and having a story.

In colder climates, preparation for winter can be used for observation, conversation, play, stories. Songs, stories, and poems encourage dramatic and action play. Some materials are listed below as suggestions. Each teacher will find many others as she keeps up with books, stories, music.

### BOOKS

*Johnny Maple-Leaf*, Alvin R. Tresselt. New York: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Co., Inc., 1948.

*Now It's Fall*, Lois Lenski. New York: Oxford University Press, 1948.



- Scatter, the Chipmunk*, Catherine C. Coblenz. Chicago: Childrens Press, 1946.
- The Little House*, Virginia Lee Burton. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1942.
- Three Little Chipmunks*, Marjorie Torrey. New York: Grossett & Dunlap, Inc., 1947.
- Travelers All*, Irma E. Webber. New York: William R. Scott, Inc., 1944.

## STORIES

- Read-to-Me Story Book*, Child Study Association of America. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1947.
- "Two Farmers"—Margaret Wise Brown
- Told Under the Blue Umbrella*, Association for Childhood Education International. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1933.
- "A Visit to the Farm"—Dorothy Baruch
- "Lost in the Leaves"—Frances Rowley

## POEMS

- Told Under the Blue Umbrella*, Association for Childhood Education International. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1933.
- "Walking in the Woods"—Katherine Reeves
- Sung Under the Silver Umbrella*, Association for Childhood Education International. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1935.
- "The Squirrel"—Author unknown
- "The City of Falling Leaves"—Amy Lowell
- Very Young Verses*, Barbara P. Geismer and Antoinette B. Suter. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1945.
- "Autumn Leaves"—Margaret P. Sutphin
- "Autumn Woods"—James S. Tippet
- "The Wind"—Robert Louis Stevenson
- "The Whirl and Twirl"—Author unknown

## MUSIC

- Another Singing Time*, Satis N. Coleman and Alice G. Thorn. New York: John Day Co., Inc., 1937.
- "Three Red Apples"
- "In the Woods"
- Martin and Judy Songs*, Edith Lovell Thomas. Boston: Beacon Press, 1948.
- "Dance, Leaves!"
- Our First Music*, Marie Teresa Armitage, P. W. Dykema, Gladys Pitcher, and others. Evanston, Ill.: Summy-Birchard Publishing Co., 1941.
- "In School Together"

*Singing Time*, Satis N. Coleman and Alice G. Thorn. New York: John Day Co., Inc., 1930.

"Apple Tree"

"Falling Leaves"

*Songs for the Nursery School*, Laura P. MacCarteney. Cincinnati: The Willis Music Co., 1937.

"Falling Leaves"

*Songs We Sing*, Mattie C. Leatherwood. Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1939.

"The Little Leaves"

*Our Singing World; Kindergarten Book*, Lilla Belle Pitts and others. New York: Ginn & Co., 1949.

"The Wind Is Singing"

"The Leaves"

## *Halloween*

This is a time for fun, for dress-up, for pretending to be afraid. Making jack-o-lanterns from pumpkins is a high point in the celebration. This gives another chance to talk of growing things, of seeds, of many gifts of the garden. Securing one or several big pumpkins and some smaller ones can be an interesting experience. This may prompt a trip to the grocery store, to someone's garden, or to a farm. When the pumpkin is cut, the children will enjoy seeing the seeds, the inside meat. One group had small pumpkin pies from the pumpkin meat. Another helped arrange the seeds to dry, to store for winter. In the spring those who wanted the seeds for planting put them into envelopes and took them home. The next fall, several children brought pumpkins to school from their gardens.

To vary the type of jack-o-lantern, one group decorated the pumpkin with garden produce instead of cutting it. A carrot made the nose, cauliflower was used for ears, a string bean for moustache, lima beans for eyes. A garden hat trimmed with other vegetables gave an added touch.

Black and orange paper may be used to make simple costumes. If cooking facilities are available, cookies may be made and decorated for a simple Halloween party. A special cookie cut as a

pumpkin or a cat and served with orange juice can constitute a real party for young children, especially if gay napkins decorate each place.

No doubt the holiday idea will be observed in paintings, in drawings, in clay work, without any urging on the part of the teacher. Orange and black paint will be available. All children may not choose these special activities and they should not be forced to do so. Block building, home play, other types of painting and drawing, may be chosen instead. The child's interest and desire will indicate when he is ready to participate in special activities and when he is ready to end them. The teacher presents the opportunity, supplying necessary materials, then leaves the choice of using them to the children.

### BOOKS

*Georgie*, Robert Bright. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1944.  
*Pumpkin Moonshine*, Tasha Tudor. New York: Oxford University Press, 1938.

### STORIES

*Told Under the Blue Umbrella*, Association for Childhood Education International. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1933.  
"The Jack-o-Lantern"—Mabel G. LaRue

### POEMS

*Silver Pennies*, Blanche J. Thompson. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1925.  
Poems of elves and fairies.  
*Time for Poetry*, May Hill Arbuthnot. Chicago: Scott, Foresman & Co., 1952.  
"Hallowe'en"—Frances M. Frost.  
"Black and Gold"—Nancy Byrd Turner

### MUSIC

*Fun With Music*, Mary Jarman Nelson. Chicago: Albert Whitman and Co., 1941.  
"Hallowe'en"  
*Music for Living Through the Day*, James L. Mursell and others, Teacher's Book I. Morristown, N. J.: Silver Burdett Co., 1956.  
"It's a Pumpkin"  
"The Witch Rides"

*Songs for the Nursery School*, Laura P. MacCarteney. Cincinnati: The Willis Music Co., 1937.

"Hallowe'en"

*Our Singing World*; Kindergarten Book, Lilla Belle Pitts and others. New York: Ginn and Co., 1949.

"I'm a Jack-o-Lantern"

"Hallowe'en Has Come"

*Twenty Little Songs*, Jessie Carter. Cincinnati: The Willis Music Co., 1952.

"Jack-o-Lantern"

## *Thanksgiving*

The story of the first Thanksgiving may be very simply told if the children are ready for it, but the emphasis of the holiday will be on present-day living and the many things for which children can feel glad. This is a good time to talk of farms, of gathering the crops before winter, of the many people who help, such as the farmer, the grocer, the dairyman. Some idea of dependence of people on each other can be developed. It is a time to express in words and in pictures and through art media those things about which we are glad. A poster can be made illustrating "We Are Glad For" through drawings, paintings, cut-out pictures. Some children may be interested in making a frieze for the room. This can be done on a long strip of wrapping paper. After the over-all planning, each child who wishes to contribute works on his own section.

Worship and prayer come easily when a feeling of thanksgiving is aroused. Most prayers should be informal, spontaneous. The teacher takes advantage of each opportunity for worship. For instance, as the cutting of the jack-o-lantern is in progress, part of the conversation can easily be led to talking of the pumpkin growing, of the need for water and sunshine, of God providing these, and of our pleasure in having the pumpkin. A prayer such as, "God, we are glad this pumpkin grew. Thank You," can come appropriately at this time. Prayer songs can express the children's feeling and thinking. Some such songs are, "Thank You for the World So Sweet," "Father, We Thank You for the Night," "Thank Him, Thank Him."



One kindergarten group visited the organist in the choir loft, sang their favorite Thanksgiving songs as she played on the organ. Another group included the church maid and janitor among those people for whom they were thankful. To show their thanks, each child brought two pieces of fruit, placed them into two baskets which they had helped to decorate. It was fun taking the baskets in their wagons to the janitor and maid in another part of the building. Another group brought cans of fruit juice to send to a children's hospital.

A short blessing is asked each day at lunch time, sometimes by the teacher, sometimes by a child, often by the group. Sometimes the blessing is sung. Perhaps at lunch the day before Thanksgiving holiday, different food might be enjoyed. Children could make jello or a pudding. Through conversation, song and story, suitable pictures and books, the children are guided to think of God and the many things for which they want to thank Him.

### BOOKS

- The Thanksgiving Story*, Alice Dalgliesh. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954.  
*The Thank-You Book*, Françoise. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947.

### POEMS

- Very Young Verses*, Barbara P. Geismer and Antoinette B. Suter. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1945.  
 "For Thursday"—Author unknown

### MUSIC

- Music for Living Through the Day*, Teacher's Book I, James L. Mursell and others. Morristown, N. J.: Silver Burdett Co., 1956.  
 "Thankfulness"  
 "Mr. Turkey"  
*Our First Music*, Marie Teresa Armitage, P. W. Dykema, Gladys Pitcher, and others. Evanston, Ill.: Summy-Birchard Publishing Co., 1941.  
 "Hymn of Joy"  
*Songs for the Pre-School Child*, Aurora M. Shumate. Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1941.  
 "Glad Song"

*Twenty Little Songs*, Jessie Carter. Cincinnati: The Willis Music Co., 1952.

"The Big Turkey"

*When the Little Child Wants to Sing*, edited by Calvin W. Laufer. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1935.

"I Am Happy, Very Happy Today"

"Ev'ry Morning Seems to Say"

"Thank You, Father"

"Thank You for the World So Sweet"

## *Christmas*

Jim was at the easel, carefully and thoughtfully working. First he painted a large house with windows and a big door. For the house he used silver paint which had been provided for Christmas work. For the windows a bright yellow was used, giving an effect of lights in the house. In one window he put bright colors for a Christmas tree. In the door other bright colors were used for the Christmas wreath. When he had finished, he stood back and looked at the picture with satisfaction, then turned and said to the teacher, "Look, a home with Christmas shining."

How delightful it would be if Christmas could be "shining" in each kindergarten home. There would not be rush and undue excitement, but a joy and a busyness. Perhaps each child might make a surprise gift for a loved one at home, but he wouldn't have to if the spirit of giving did not prompt his action. Maybe the gift to Mother or Daddy would be the picture he treasured as "Christmas shining," with the story written on it by the teacher. A clay production, an appropriate Christmas card and message, a Christmas tree ornament he has made, can mean much to the recipient if the child has done the planning and work himself. If the weeks before Christmas are filled with frantic preparation, the joy and spirit of Christmas can be lost.

It is well to have a parents' meeting before Christmas preparations are begun. The parents need to know the opportunities the children have to make gifts and Christmas tree decorations, to enjoy stories and songs, play out experiences. It is important to know how to receive a gift made by a child. Parents often need help in buying the right kind of toys and books for their children.

Teachers and parents should not start talking about Christmas too soon. Anticipating an event weeks ahead is hard on a young child. Whatever is planned, time must be allowed for unhurried enjoyment of Christmas songs, stories, and good fellowship.

The kindergarten Christmas tree, the decorated bulletin boards, and the use of Christmas greens in the room contribute to the festive feeling. Be sure the tree is the size and shape to allow children to do most of the trimming. The decorations will be changed many times before the school holidays begin, for arranging and rearranging are fun.

Many of the traditional stories, such as *The Night Before Christmas*, by Clement C. Moore, will be told. Children will talk of Santa Claus and the gifts they hope to get. Along with this interest, Christmas as a giving time can be presented. Children can be encouraged to think of and plan surprises for those they love. They can be helped to think of ways they can share their stories, songs, and games with others.

In the church school weekday kindergarten, there are many opportunities to lead children to think of Christmas as the birthday of Jesus and of God's love that prompted the greatest gift to earth. Christmas carols easy for children to learn can be enjoyed. Many of these are heard over radio and television, in homes and church, and so become familiar, even though not all the words and thoughts are within their understanding. The Christmas story of the birth of Jesus has an appeal for children. Stories of Jesus as a man should also be told in order that the child may connect the idea of Jesus as a baby with that of Jesus as a man.

Whatever is planned as a special event just before the Christmas holidays should be very simple. If rehearsals are needed, the experience loses its value. Chosen songs and stories may be used in informal ways without practices. In one kindergarten, families were invited to come on a day before the Christmas holidays. The children with their parents went into the church chapel which the children had helped to decorate. The organist played the Christmas songs the children had chosen. Everyone sang together. The parents were given the words in a small Christmas booklet.

The minister read the Christmas story from the Bible and had a short prayer. All then went back to the kindergarten room. Under the Christmas tree were packages, one for each child, a simple gift the teacher had made—a jar of homemade paste. Daddies distributed the gifts, after which the children went home with their parents. This sort of celebration gave an opportunity for bringing parents and children together for a satisfying experience in the school environment. This is not the only way. Each teacher must work out what seems best in her own situation, but must be careful not to exploit the children or overstimulate them.

In evaluating the Christmas experiences, we need to ask: Was there a feeling of satisfaction and contentment? Did the child have a happy, busy time? Is the child more aware of doing things for others while still enjoying what is being done for him? Was he too excited and overstimulated? Did the experiences help him in his relations to God and Jesus? Will his experiences help him to contribute to a satisfying celebration at home? Will his parents be helped in the home celebration of Christmas?

## BOOKS

- A Star Shone*, Robbie Trent. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1948.
- Christmas Kitten*, Janet Konkle. Chicago: Childrens Press, 1953.
- Jesus and the Children*, Ethel Smither. New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1929.
- Jesus, the Little New Baby*, Mary Edna Lloyd. Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1951.
- Noel for Jeanne-Marie*, Francoise. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953.
- Once There Was a Little Boy*, Dorothy Kunhardt. New York: The Viking Press, 1946.
- One Thousand Christmas Beards*, Roger Duvoisin. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1955.
- Paddy's Christmas*, Helen A. Monsell. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1942.
- The Christ Child*, Illustrated by Maud and Miska Petersham. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1931.
- The Christmas Forest*, Louise Fatio. New York: Aladdin Books, 1950.
- The Little Fir Tree*, Margaret Wise Brown. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1954.
- The Night Before Christmas*, Clement C. Moore, Illustrated by Roger Duvoisin. Garden City, N. Y.: Garden City Books, 1954.



## STORIES

*How to Tell Stories to Children*, Sara Cone Bryant, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1905, 1933.

"The Golden Cobwebs"

"Why the Evergreen Trees Keep Their Leaves in Winter"

*Martin and Judy Stories*, Vol. 3, Verna Hills. Boston: Beacon Press, 1943.

"Who Is Santa Claus?"

*Told Under the Blue Umbrella*, Association for Childhood Education International. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1933.

"The Little Blue Dishes"

*Told Under the Magic Umbrella*, Association for Childhood Education International. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1939.

"A Happy Christmas Tree"—Frances A. Brown

## POEMS

*Very Young Verses*, Barbara P. Geismer and Antoinette B. Suter. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1945.

"Why Do Bells for Christmas Ring?"—Eugene Field

"The Friendly Beasts"—A French Carol

## MUSIC

*Another Singing Time*, Satis N. Coleman and Alice G. Thorn. New York: John Day Co., Inc., 1937.

"Christmas Song"

"Dancing Around the Christmas Tree"

"The Steeple Bell"

"Tiny Bells"

*Fun With Music*, Mary Jarman Nelson. Chicago: Albert Whitman and Co., 1941.

"Jingle Bells"

*Singing Time*, Satis N. Coleman and Alice G. Thorn. New York: John Day Co., Inc., 1930.

"Christmas Bells"

"Santa Claus"

*Songs Children Like*, Association for Childhood Education International, Washington D. C., 1954.

"A Merry Christmas"

*Songs for the Pre-School Age*, Aurora M. Shumate. Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1941.

"Little Baby in a Manger, I Love You"

*Songs for the Nursery School*, Laura P. MacCarteney. Cincinnati: The Willis Music Co., 1937.

"O Christmas Tree"

*Twenty Little Songs*, Jessie Carter. Cincinnati: The Willis Music Co., 1952.

"The Christmas Tree"

"Christmas Bells"

*When the Little Child Wants to Sing*, edited by Calvin W. Laufer. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1935.

"A Christmas Carol"

"Baby Jesus"

"Away in a Manger"

*Worship and Conduct Songs*, Elizabeth McE. Shields. Richmond, Va.: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1929.

"Jesus, Our Friend"

## RECORD

"Pussycat's Christmas," Margaret Wise Brown. The Children's Record Guild, New York.

## Winter

Although the severity of weather varies a great deal in different sections of the country, children enjoy stories of winter fun. If they have the advantage of play in the snow, these experiences will be made more meaningful to them. If they have never seen snow, they can still enjoy to some extent the stories of other children playing in snow. In every section, winter brings some changes.

Experimenting with water in various temperatures interests children. Seeing what happens to water when put outside in freezing weather or into the freezer, watching vapor rise from a kettle of boiling water, noting steam on the windows in the heated house, bring questions. Changes can be observed in the garden in winter, spring, summer. How animals keep warm can be an interesting subject.

There will be fewer days of outdoor play in some climates, although children should get outdoors as much as possible. Paved walkways allow for different types of games and outdoor activi-

ties, for riding wheel toys, even when the ground is damp. The type of weather suggests the appropriate pictures, stories, songs, and plays.

### BOOKS

- All Ready for Winter*, Leone Adelson. New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1952.  
*Jeanne-Marie Counts Her Sheep*, Francoise. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951.  
*Pelle's New Suit*, Elsa Beskow. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1929.  
*The Big Snow*, Berta and Elmer Hader. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1948.

### STORIES

- Read Me More Stories*, Child Study Association of America. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1951.  
 "Little Bear Takes His Nap"—Catherine Woolley

### POEMS

- Time for Poetry*, May Hill Arbuthnot. Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1952.  
 "Falling Snow"—Author unknown  
 "The Mitten Song"—Marie Louise Allen  
*Very Young Verses*, Barbara P. Geismer and Antoinette B. Suter. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1945.  
 "Brooms"—Dorothy Aldis  
 "First Snow"—Mary Louise Allen  
 "Icy"—Rhoda Bacmeister  
 "Milk in Winter"—Rhoda Bacmeister  
 "Snow Storm"—Rhoda Bacmeister  
 "White Field"—James Stephens

### MUSIC

- Happy Songs for Happy Children*, Meta Siebold. New York: G. Schirmer & Co., 1928.  
 "Little Jack Frost"  
 "Snow"  
*Singing Time*, Satis N. Coleman and Alice G. Thorn. New York: John Day Co., Inc., 1930.  
 "Snow Flakes"  
 "The Snow Man"

## *Valentine's Day*

When Valentine materials appear in the stores, children begin talking of Valentine's Day. Much of their conversation is based on what their brothers and sisters tell them about the celebration.

From time to time until the day arrives, some of the children will choose to make valentines at their work-time, while others may be carrying on activities not related to the season. Red, white, and other colors of construction paper appear on the supply shelf. Small lace-paper doilies, pictures, bits of ribbon and lace, make excellent decorating material. A pair of pinking shears gives the paper a distinctive edge. A valentine box can be decorated several days ahead of Valentine's Day. Children may want to deposit their valentines to classmates before the day arrives. It will help the teacher if a list of the kindergarten group is given to each mother with the understanding that it is not necessary for valentines to be sent. A big envelope made by stapling two pieces of 9" x 12" construction paper together on three sides serves the purpose of helping the child to get home with his valentines intact. Remembering that it is hard for children to sit and wait, the teacher should plan a quick way to distribute the valentines. Perhaps a committee of mothers will come during the day and sort the valentines, putting them into each child's envelope. Time must be saved for children to look at their valentines.

A heart-shaped cookie for lunch adds interest. One group made cookies which they shared with others. Some were wrapped in gay valentine paper and taken to members of the church staff. A game similar to "Drop the Handkerchief" may be played, using a red paper heart instead of a handkerchief. Since many children will be receiving valentine mail, this may be an appropriate time to talk about the postman. Children will enjoy playing postman and delivering valentines. Stories and songs will be enjoyed.

## BOOKS

*The Valentine Party*, Pamela Bianco. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1955.



## POEMS

Words of songs may be used as poems as there are more songs available than can be used with young children.

## SONGS

*Another Singing Time*, Satis N. Coleman and Alice G. Thorn. New York: John Day Co., Inc., 1937.

"A Valentine Song"

*Happy Songs for Happy Children*, Meta Siebold. New York: G. Schirmer & Co., 1928.

"A Valentine"

*Our First Music*, Marie Teresa Armitage, P. W. Dykema, Gladys Pitcher, and others. Evanston, Ill.: Summy-Birchard Publishing Co., 1941.

"My Valentine"

"Valentine Question"

*When the Little Child Wants to Sing*, edited by Calvin W. Laufer. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1935.

"Valentine's Day"

*Our Singing World; Kindergarten Book*, Lilla Belle Pitts and others. New York: Ginn & Co., 1949.

"When You Send a Valentine"

## *Spring and Easter*

Spring days bring a sense of freedom, of release from many of the restrictions of winter. Heavy coats, snowsuits, and galoshes can be laid aside. The fresh new world beckons one out to wider fields of exploration, of adventure with nature. Children like to bring to school sprigs on which buds are beginning to burst. They watch carefully any seeds they plant in window boxes or outdoors in the garden. Fortunate are those who can have a garden in the school yard. Working in the soil, planting seed, seeing them come up, can bring the child close to God who has "made everything beautiful in its time." With a little encouragement, the child investigates, asks questions, admires the beautiful.

Some satisfying things to do in the spring are:

Visit a farm where there are young animals.

Have a pet cage for a visiting rabbit or chicken.

Plant seeds in cotton or on a blotter kept moist with water.

Plant seeds in a window box.

Plant a garden.

Visit a nearby garden.

Arrange spring flowers.

Enjoy action play of birds flying, wind blowing, flowers growing.

Provide pastel colors for easel and finger painting.

Watch birds, talk of nest building, feed birds.

Relate experiences with beautiful things to moments of wonder with God.

Observe a cocoon. It is a thrilling experience to have a moth or butterfly emerge in the schoolroom.

In the midst of spring comes Easter. With young children it is best to associate the idea of Easter with new life at springtime and with God's love and His plan for us. Stories of Jesus, of His life as He went about loving and helping others, are appropriate to use. Young children cannot understand the significance of Jesus' death. This comes at a later stage of development. The idea of death sometimes brings fear to the young child, and the true meaning of Easter is lost. In one of his early morning conversations, Carl said, "You know, some mean men killed Jesus and buried Him. A woman came. An angel said, 'Jesus is not here!'" Since nothing had been told of this in kindergarten, the teacher did not know just what Carl had heard nor what had prompted him to tell the incident at this particular time. She answered, for it seemed something was expected of her, "I am glad Jesus is alive." "But He isn't," said Carl. "He is dead. Some mean men killed Him." The Resurrection could not be comprehended by Carl. The idea of Jesus being killed did impress him. Did the relating of this Easter story give Carl a wrong concept of Jesus and His life?

Having many experiences out of doors with wonders of nature, watching new life emerge, the child can be guided to know God

as Creator and to learn of His love in planning new life. Springtime provides opportunities for rich learning experiences in all phases of the child's life.

### BOOKS

- Hi, Mister Robin*, Alvin Tresselt. New York: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Co., Inc., 1950.  
*Johnny and the Monarch*, Margaret Friskey. Chicago: Childrens Press, 1946.  
*Really Spring*, Gene Zion. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956.  
*Springtime for Jeanne-Marie*, Francoise. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955.  
*Stepladder Babies*, Alta M. McIntire. Chicago: Wilcox and Follett Publishing Co., 1946.  
*The Growing Story*, Ruth Krauss. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1947.  
*The Restless Robin*, Marjorie Flack. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1937.  
*The Walking Hat*, William Hall. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1950.

### STORIES

- Read Me More Stories*, Child Study Association of America. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1951.  
"The Runaway Bunny"—Margaret Wise Brown  
*Read-to-Me Story Book*, Child Study Association of America. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1947.  
"New Clothes"—Lucy Sprague Mitchell  
*Told Under the Blue Umbrella*, Association for Childhood Education International. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1933.  
"Snow White"—Alice D. Pratt  
"The New Songs"—Alice D. Pratt

### POEMS

- Time for Poetry*, May Hill Arbuthnot. Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1952.  
"Catkin"—Author unknown  
*Sung Under the Silver Umbrella*, Association for Childhood Education International. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1935.  
"Rabbits"—Dorothy Baruch  
"Choosing Shoes"—Frida Wolfe  
*Very Young Verses*, Barbara P. Geismer and Antoinette B. Suter. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1945.  
"Dandelions"—Marietta W. Brewster  
"Raining"—Rhoda Bacmeister  
"The Robin"—Laurence A. Tadema

## MUSIC

*Another Singing Time*, Satis N. Coleman and Alice G. Thorn. New York: John Day Co., Inc., 1937.

"A Song About a Rabbit"

"Easter Eggs"

"Springtime"

"The Spring of the Year"

*Singing Time*, Satis N. Coleman and Alice G. Thorn. New York: John Day Co., Inc., 1930.

"Mother Hen"

"Sing, O Sing"

"The Little Bunny"

"The Robin"

*Songs We Sing*, Mattie C. Leatherwood. Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1939.

"Springtime"

"Tell Us What You See"

*Our Singing World; Kindergarten Book*, Lilla Belle Pitts and others. New York: Ginn and Co., 1949.

"A Little Seed"

"Little Johnny Jump-Up"

*New Singing Time*, Satis N. Coleman and Alice G. Thorn. New York: John Day Co., Inc., 1950.

"Little Seed"

"Planting Seed"

"A Spring Song"

"Robin in the Rain"

"Building a Nest"

*Twenty Little Songs*, Jessie Carter. Cincinnati: The Willis Music Co., 1952.

"Robin, Robin"

"Spring Song"

*When the Little Child Wants to Sing*, edited by Calvin W. Laufer. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1935.

"Fuzzy Wuzzy Caterpillar"

"Our Bunny's So Funny"

"Robin Redbreast"

"Something Happy"

*Worship and Conduct Songs*, Elizabeth McE. Shields. Richmond, Va.: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1929.

"Nature's Message"



## *Birthdays*

The idea of growing up fascinates the kindergarten child. A birthday is a big event in his life. Although home is the place for the real celebration of birthdays, the child likes to have recognition of this special day at school. Making a child happy does not require elaborate preparation. In fact, he is often confused and overstimulated by a big party and many presents. Having birthday parties at school can create competition in providing refreshments, can present problems in children eating sweets during the morning. A birthday song, a special cookie at lunch, make the day a different one for him and his friends. He likes the recognition on the day itself. We need to remember that the child has little sense of time, and one celebration of all birthdays in a particular month has little significance for him.

A birthday postcard mailed by the teacher to his home provides a personal touch. A young child likes to receive mail. Everyone in the family gets mail more often than he does, so the postman's visit on his birthday gives him a real thrill.

## BOOKS

*Ask Mr. Bear*, Marjorie Flack. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1932.

*Barbara's Birthday*, Irma Simonton Black. New York: William R. Scott, Inc., 1946.

*Hello, Judy! Stories*, Charlotte Becker. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941.

*Manuela's Birthday in Old Mexico*, Laura Bannon. Chicago: Albert Whitman and Co., 1943.

*Miss Flora McFlimsey's Birthday*, Mariana. New York: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Co., Inc., 1952.

*Surprise for Davy*, Lois Lenski. New York: Oxford University Press, 1947.

## STORIES

*Read Me More Stories*, Child Study Association of America. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1951.

"The Growing Up Story of Jonathan"—Lillian Moore

*Read-to-Me Story Book*, Child Study Association of America. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1947.

"Surprise"—Charims

*Told Under the Blue Umbrella*, Association for Childhood Education International, New York: The Macmillan Co., 1933.

"Jim and Scotch and the Little Red Wagon"—Mary Louise Allen

### POEMS

*Very Young Verses*, Barbara P. Geismer and Antoinette B. Suter, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1945.

"Five Years Old"—Mary Louise Allen

"Growing Up"—Author unknown

"Little Brother's Secret"—Katherine Mansfield

### MUSIC

*Singing Time*, Satis N. Coleman and Alice G. Thorn, New York: John Day Co., Inc., 1930.

"A Birthday Song"

*Songs We Sing*, Mattie C. Leatherwood, Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1939.

"Birthday Song"

### RECORDS

"Come to the Party"—Children's Record Guild, New York.

"Through the Day"—Music for Living Series, Silver Burdett Co., Morristown, N. J.

## *The School Year Ends*

Nursery school for some children and kindergarten for more are the first steps along the journey of education in school. The end of the kindergarten year is not an appropriate time for any graduation exercises, for the child does not graduate; he leaves kindergarten for the first grade, the next step in his school life. Whatever is done the last week or the last day of the school term should be in keeping with the philosophy of teaching during the year. The value of the experience must be in terms of what happens to the child. Never is it appropriate to put on a show, to exploit the child, to advertise the special kindergarten through him. If parents have been close to the school program, if they have caught the vision of good experiences for children, they will

not want a "last day program." There can be satisfying days at the end of the school year. Children may take more time to enjoy favorite songs, stories, plays. They may plan for a family picnic with the help and guidance of the teacher. One such outdoor picnic was planned by a group for the last school day. The children helped make sandwiches. Mothers prepared the lemonade and furnished ice cream. Sandwiches were arranged on platters for the adults. The children helped wrap their lunches in red bandanna handkerchiefs so that they would not have to wait to be served. At the playground, games and rhythms were enjoyed. Lunch was served. Each child was given a booklet containing stories the children themselves had dictated during the year about special happenings. The children had decorated the book covers. School ended as the families said good-by to the teacher and to each other.

### *Summary on Curriculum (Chapters IV and V)*

The kindergarten curriculum is made up of a well-balanced and wisely guided series of experiences which contribute to the learning and growth of the child. It includes a variety of activities, such as those described in this and the preceding chapter: the boat play of Bucky, Jimmy, and the three girls; the making of butter; the enjoyment of appropriate books; finding and talking about seeds; worship growing out of this experience; and many other activities. These experiences are based on the goals of the kindergarten for the child's total development and on the needs and interests of the particular children involved.

Such a curriculum calls for careful and continuous planning on the part of the teacher and for her willingness to let children participate in the planning. It requires the teacher's readiness to change her plans as new opportunities and insights present themselves. Thus, the curriculum is never finished, but is constantly in the process of being developed to meet the needs of children and to help children grow and learn.

## *Toward Christian Living*

"What does God look like?" "Where does He live?" "Is God a boy or a girl?" "Has God always been God?" "Why do we have a God?" "God can go faster than a jet." "I wish Daddy would throw me up so high I'd go right through the sky, and then I'd shake hands with God and come right back again." "Why do people have to die and go to heaven?" "Suppose we get lost between here and heaven and can't find the place?"

### *Search for God*

Through their many questions and comments children show that they are reaching out for more understanding of God. The adult's Christian beliefs and understanding of children will influence the way these questions will be answered and will affect the child's religious growth. Children reveal that they are forming their ideas of God from their own limited experiences. Inevitably these impressions will be immature ones, since the child explains things to himself through what he knows and bases his ideas and questions accordingly. He usually thinks of God as a physical being, since he cannot comprehend "Spirit." This need not limit him in gradually outgrowing this concept provided he gets in his early years the feeling of God as good, loving, wise, just.

The child who said, "You'd better not take that candy. God is watching you," will need help in changing his concept. How different was Mary's feeling toward God when she said, "Please carry me outside again, Daddy, so I can see the stars and feel we



are close to God." But Gloria did not want the closeness as she understood it. She refused to go up on a mountain, saying, "It is too close to God. He might take me." Had she heard some Bible story or passage before she could understand it? Or had some experience related to the death of someone close to her made her afraid she would die?

We must be careful that we do not confuse the child through what we say. Often we talk in terms of adult concepts and symbols which the child cannot understand. Telling the story of the First Christmas, Miss Lee said, "Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem to pay taxes." Joan interrupted, "Why did they have to pay the taxi, when Mary rode a donkey?" Some children are confused over reference to the church as "God's House." When they go to a person's house they expect to see that person. One child said, "God didn't come to our room today." Another remarked, "I didn't see God there." When a new church education building was ready, Eric asked, "Will we have a new Jesus?"

### *How to Help*

How can we help these young children in their religious living when there is so much that they cannot understand? We realize each child comes with some religious concepts already formed. He has experienced love and care in his home life, which may be satisfying or disturbing. The lives of his parents have influenced and are influencing every phase of his living. His growth toward God has begun favorably if in his home he is learning that there are acceptable ways of living, that there are restrictions and responsibilities along with met desires. Experiencing fairness and justice gives him a basis for a better understanding of God. As he hears the words love, trust, understanding, forgiveness, used in connection with his own experiences, the truth of "God is love" has more meaning to him.

As we live with children, watch their actions, listen to their questions and comments, we realize that talking to them, telling stories, and using Bible verses play only a small part in helping

them in religious living. In fact, these methods, if used unwisely or too much, lead to confusion and to damaging concepts. *It is the way children learn to live that influences them most.* In our planning we need to think of how we can use the everyday happenings in work and play to foster growth.

What is religious living on the level of the four- or five-year-old? It involves feelings about himself, about others, and the beginning consciousness of God. Every phase of his life influences his feelings and how he deals with them. Teaching religious living cannot be pigeonholed into one period a day, but must permeate the entire program.

The teacher's own living influences the child more than anything she says. Does she make him feel comfortable in school? Can he trust her? Does she respect him as an individual? Does she handle situations with patience and inner calmness? In other words, does she live her religion? If so, the child in his association with her can feel these qualities. Her voice and manner, her understanding of his interests and difficulties, will offer experiences that build faith and trust. She cannot be perfect, always doing and saying the right things in the right way. She is a human being, too. The child will accept her if when she is wrong or impatient, she acknowledge it. It is the general tone of her behavior and attitudes that influences him most.

During the first few weeks of school Allene had trouble in being separated from her mother. A new baby was expected in the family. Allene knew things were becoming different at home and felt insecure in leaving. One day she remarked on arrival at school, "I am sleepy. I don't want to play." The teacher said, "If you wish, you can get your rug and rest." "But I can't rest without my blanket." "Bring your blanket tomorrow if you need it," replied the teacher. The next day Allene came with her baby blanket. The teacher helped her to block off a resting place in which she placed her rug. With the teacher's nod of approval she lay down, and put her blanket over her with one corner of it in her mouth. After a very short rest she got up, put away her rug and blanket, and began to play in the housekeeping center. This

episode was not repeated nor did Allene say again that she wanted to go home to her mother. The teacher's understanding and her quiet way of letting Allene work through her problem somehow strengthened Allene's sense of security. It gave her a new feeling of trust at school. There was no need to verbalize this experience with Allene, but many times experiences can be deepened by the needed words at the time.

Arthur was putting the baby to bed. He covered her and patted her, then sat down at the tea table with Jean who had been preparing the meal. The teacher sat down with them. She said, "God plans that babies have someone to take care of them, so He makes mothers and daddies and sisters and brothers. Arthur, I think you must help with the baby at home." "Yes, I hand Mother the box of powder when she bathes him." Jean added, "I help Mother set the table." The teacher then said, "God, we are glad for mothers and daddies, for big girls and boys, for babies."

"Here's a door," said Cindy in a rather low voice as she painted; then in a happy tone, "Here's the sunshine, and it's shining, shining, shining today." She looked up as the teacher passed by. "Yes, Cindy, I see the sunshine you painted. And outdoors I see sunshine, too. God has made a sunshiny day," remarked the teacher. Such references must be sincere on the part of the adult and not made so often that they will seem commonplace and have no real meaning. There are times when the children and teacher have an experience too deeply felt to be put into words, such as happened when the church sanctuary was visited. The day was one when the sun often was covered by clouds. This was true when the group went into the sanctuary. As they were looking at the beautiful stained-glass windows, the clouds moved away from the sun and the bright sunlight shone upon the lovely colored glass. There was a moment of wonder as the group stood quietly and looked. No one spoke as they watched, nor even as they left the sanctuary. The teacher felt that they had shared a real moment of worship inspired by the beauty of light and color.

In connection with religious living, the teacher thinks of the

emotional adjustment of each child. He cannot be free to become his best self if he is at outs with himself, if he cannot work and play with some degree of satisfaction. Tom had trouble with his driving group on the way to school. His irritation was evident when he came into kindergarten. Encouraged to use finger paints, he worked with energy and abandon. Relieved of some of the early morning tension, he got better control of himself. Betty needed assurance now and again that the teacher liked her. Often a squeeze of the hand sufficed. Sometimes the teacher gave her a special job to do, such as choosing a picture for the bulletin board. Meeting the needs of each child helps him in his religious growth.

Religious development involves the ability to live happily and effectively with others. Many opportunities are provided through which individuals grow in their living together. At this stage of development it is hard to share toys and perhaps even more difficult to share the attention of the teacher. Taking turns requires self-control. Ways of working in a group are hard to learn. The teacher tries not to expect too much but to foster thoughtfulness of others. She helps members of the group to find satisfaction in working well together.

Robbie loved shoes, high-heeled shoes. Every day she seemed able to get the pair of black patent leather high-heeled shoes from the dress-up box. Looking at Edith's face and seeing how she watched Robbie, one could tell she wanted the shoes, even though she made no effort to get them. The teacher went to Robbie and quietly said, "I think Edith would like to wear the shoes. After you have had them a while longer, maybe you will ask Edith if she wants to wear them." The teacher went off to some other part of the room. Later she noticed that Robbie approached Edith and that Edith joyously accepted the shoes. Robbie grew a bit when she was willing to let someone else use the shoes. Soon afterward Edith had her chance to be helpful. Mark was struggling over a puzzle and began to be discouraged. "Mark," the teacher said, "are you having trouble?" Just then Edith came along. "Maybe Edith can help." Edith sorted the pieces of puzzle, then let Mark



put them in as she found the proper places. A look of joy came to Mark's face as the puzzle was finished. "Let's do it again," he said. The second time he needed a little help. The third time he did it alone. Mark and Edith were delighted.

John, the largest boy in the group, stood and watched the others busy with their various activities. After giving him some time to look, the teacher asked him if he would like to use some blocks. John went with her to the block center, took some down, but never really used them for building. The next day he went to the blocks alone and played. This continued for several days. One day, he made a garage into which he put a big truck. Peter was carrying a case of wooden milk bottles around the room. The teacher said, "Maybe the garage man [John] wants some milk for his lunch." Instead of giving John one bottle, Peter gave him six. John played with them awhile, then called to Peter, "See where I put the milk." This was John's first attempt to talk to or play with another child in the room. He and Peter began to play together. Although John had not seemed unhappy before, a new, interested expression now came over his face.

As children are together, using materials and equipment, it becomes necessary to make simple rules. Their participation in making rules when they have seen the need for them helps in fostering consideration of others. Such rules as "Put materials away when you have finished using them," "Listen when someone is talking to the group," "Take turns talking," "Share the big trucks," remind us of better ways of living together—all a part of religious living.

Children in the church weekday kindergarten have many opportunities to develop happy and wholesome feelings toward the church. There are opportunities for knowing the members of the church staff as friends. One minister came whenever he could into the kindergarten at juice and cracker time, sat down and chatted with the children. Sometimes he asked the "blessing," sometimes the children did. At another church kindergarten the minister invited the children to his study and showed them his collection of rocks. In another one, the minister often visited the kinder-

garten room, did a bit of painting, tried the clay, worked for a few minutes with the block builders. The church organist is a real friend to one group. These children like to go into the church for a few minutes while she practices. Sometimes she plays their favorite songs for them. The very environment of the church encourages questions and wonder. The children see people coming and going to various meetings and on different errands. On days of church meetings they help by being especially quiet in the halls as they go to the play yard. Many satisfying experiences in the church form pleasant associations whereby the concept of the church is broadened.

## *Worship*

Worship has a very special place in the kindergarten. It cannot be forced. The urge must come from within, but an atmosphere of worship can be created and an attitude of worship encouraged. Music is sometimes used to help create the right atmosphere. Worship can come from a fleeting moment of wonder, as when it was discovered that a moth had emerged from the cocoon, or when the colors of a beautiful tulip were enjoyed. There are times when a teacher makes definite plans for guiding the children into worship. For one group an experience with hyacinth bulbs led to worship.

As the children were seated near Miss Sims on the rug, she showed them a bag and asked them to guess what was in it. "An apple?" "A potato?" "Candy?" were some replies. "I'll show you," said Miss Sims. When a brown bulb was taken from the bag, Bill said, "Onion." "Smell it," suggested Miss Sims. After each child had a turn feeling and smelling the bulb, Miss Sims said, "This is a hyacinth bulb. There is a secret inside, but to find the secret, we will have to plant the bulb. We will have to wait a long time for this secret. I brought from a florist a pot in which a hyacinth bulb was planted long enough ago for its secret to be learned." From another bag Miss Sims took a beautiful pink hyacinth. "Oh!" was heard when the children saw the blossom. As the flower was

admired, Miss Sims said quietly, "God 'has made everything beautiful in its time.'<sup>1</sup> Let's close our eyes and think of God and of His plan for this beautiful hyacinth to come from a bulb. Maybe you'd like to talk to God about the hyacinth." There was a quiet hum of voices: "Thank You, God, for flowers," "Thank You for bulbs," "Thank You for making things grow." In a moment Miss Sims said, "Thank You, God, for the beautiful hyacinth that came from the bulb. Amen."

The children then put on wraps, went into the yard, and planted hyacinth bulbs in their garden. After they came back into the house, Miss Sims told the story, "The Brown Bulb's Secret." This experience and others in watching the bulbs come up in the garden brought opportunities for wonder and worship.

### THE BROWN BULB'S SECRET

One fall, many weeks ago, the postman had brought a white envelope with Bill's name on it. Inside was a letter from Grandmother, which said:

Dear Bill:

I am sending you a box of secrets. When you open the box, take good care of what you find. Then watch and wait.

Love,

Grandmother

The next day, just when Bill thought he couldn't wait another minute, the postman came again. This time, sure enough, he brought a box from Grandmother.

When Bill opened the box, he didn't know what to think. He was even a little disappointed, for all he saw there were some little brown lumps that Mother called "bulbs." "They don't look like very good secrets to me," Bill said.

"Oh," said Mother, "I think the bulbs hold the secrets inside themselves. Don't you remember what Grandmother's letter said?" They read again: "Take good care of what you find. Then watch and wait."

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1. Ecclesiastes 3:11a.

Bill said, "I don't know how to take care of bulbs."

"I'll help you," Mother told him.

It was fun, then, sifting some dirt from the garden until it was very soft, and filling a big pot with it. They buried the bulbs deep, deep inside, and put the pot in a dark place for a while, then in their sunniest window.

All this had been long ago in the fall. Now, warmer days had come. Most of the snow had melted from the ground outside. Sometimes Bill could leave off his leggings when he went out to play.

One day when he went to the sunny window to water his bulbs, he saw something new. There, just peeping out of the soil, were some tiny green leaves! Bill knew that at last his bulbs were beginning to tell their secret. Little green plants were slowly pushing up, up into the light.

Every day after that, Bill thought he could see that his plants had grown a bit. He learned their name. They were called hyacinths. Weeks passed. One day he noticed buds. At first the tiny buds were covered in little green jackets. Bill kept asking what color the blossoms would show. "Watch and wait," Mother reminded him. "That is part of the secret."

At last the hyacinths bloomed. There they stood, tall and fragrant in the sunlight, proudly holding their bright pink flowers.

"Now," said Mother quietly, "we can *see* the secret that the brown bulbs held."

Bill looked at the bright blossoms, and thought of the little brown bulbs. "Mother," he asked, "how could these flowers grow from little bulbs?"

"It is the life in the bulb that makes it grow, Bill," Mother answered. "You learned something about it while you were helping your plants to grow. You will learn more. But it is such a wonderful secret that no one understands all about it. God must be very wise and loving to plan a world in which we find such wonderful secrets."

Bill was very quiet for a minute, enjoying a happy, wondering feeling that was inside him.



Then he said, "Mother, I think I'll take my hyacinths to Church School so all the children can see them."

And that is just what he did!<sup>2</sup>

## *Concerns of Christian Education*

### RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Children begin to experience God through being cared for themselves, through caring for others, through caring for plants and animals, through creative activities, through the lives of those they trust. As love and understanding of God increase, the child's desire to talk to God grows. Just repeating words after the adult is not praying. Simple, direct prayer can well come when the sense of wonder is high, as "Thank You, God, for the beautiful moth." Often the children are encouraged to sit quietly and think of something each is glad about, telling what they think to God and not to people. Sometimes a prayer is sung.

### APPRECIATION OF JESUS

A beginning of an appreciation of Jesus is sought. We tell of Jesus as a friend who loves us, Jesus who lived with friends, who helped His friends, and whose friends helped Him. Jesus came as a baby. He grew to be a man. His life helps us to know God and God's love for us.

### USE OF THE BIBLE

Early in life the child can have happy associations with the Bible, the book that tells us about God and Jesus. The attitude of the teacher toward the Bible influences the child. There should be a good copy of the Bible in an appropriate place in the room. As the teacher tells a Bible story or uses verses from the Bible,

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2. "The Brown Bulb's Secret," by Mary E. Venable. Used by permission.

she holds the book in her hand. In connection with Bible stories and verses, we must remember that the young child lives in the here and now. Because many of the Bible truths are related in terms of the past and because of the limited vocabulary of the child, he cannot understand much of the Bible language. When we have to simplify a story too much, we lose the real meaning and so ruin it for the time when the person can understand the message in its true light. In choosing material we need to ask ourselves: Does the material help the child to grow in appreciation and understanding of God? Does it add to his feeling of security and love, or does it promote fear? Does it create a feeling of wonder and beauty for the child? We can use appropriate Bible verses over and over again, not to drill for memorization but because they are related to the current experience.

Some of the Bible passages to be used with kindergarten children need slight adaptation. For instance, it is better to use the name *God*, not *the Lord*, with young children because they may be confused by the various names for God. They cannot understand the meaning of Lord. Sometimes portions of a passage are omitted (as in Psalm 136, below). The Bible passages given here are among those we can use frequently with children. Unless otherwise indicated they are from the Revised Standard Version.

"O give thanks to God,  
to him who made the great lights,  
the sun to rule over the day,  
the moon and stars to rule over the night . . .  
O give thanks to God."

(Adapted from Psalm 136:1a, 7a, 8a, 9a, 26a.)

"He has made everything beautiful in its time."  
(Ecclesiastes 3:11a.)

"It is good to give thanks to God."  
(Adapted from Psalm 92:1a.)

"For, lo, the winter is past,  
The rain is over and gone;

The flowers appear on the earth;  
The time of the singing of birds has come."

(Adapted from Song of Solomon 2:11-12, King  
James Version.)

"Children, obey your parents." (Ephesians 6:1a.)

"Be kind to one another." (Ephesians 4:32a.)

"God is love." (1 John 4:8b.)

"Let us love one another; for love is of God." (1 John 4:7.)

"We love, because he first loved us." (1 John 4:19.)

### PARTICIPATION IN THE CHURCH

Happy experiences within the church help the child to love the church, to want to come to it, and to have a feeling of belonging there. He begins to think of the church as a special place where people learn about God and Jesus, where people help each other. He develops a responsibility for proper conduct in the church, for helping to keep his part of the church beautiful and in order, for participating in the work and worship of his group and finding the church a channel through which he can help others.

### UNDERSTANDING OF HIMSELF

The child needs to be able to respect himself as a person. He is a child of God. He needs to think of himself as worth something to the people and life about him. He needs to grow in ability to do things for himself, to make wise choices, and to be the best self he is capable of being. Adults can help him in this feeling toward himself through respect for him as a person—an "I—Thou relationship," as Phoebe Anderson says in her book, *Religious Living With Nursery Children*.<sup>3</sup> As the child matures, he can develop more self-control and can assume more responsibility for his conduct.

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3. *Religious Living With Nursery Children*, Phoebe Anderson. The Pilgrim Press, 1956.

## RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER PERSONS

As the child grows in his awareness of God, he learns that God's love reaches to others as well as to himself and that it is God's desire that people live together in Christian ways. It is normal for a kindergarten child to be self-centered. At this stage of development, he cannot be expected to show much maturity in thinking of others first. As his interest in others develops, he can be encouraged to respond to them in friendly ways. With guidance he begins to discover and appreciate what others do for him. He needs many satisfying experiences in sharing and taking turns. In kindergarten there are many opportunities for him to appreciate how others feel and to help them. The child's desire and ability to work and play in small groups increases as he has good experiences with others.

*Need for a Plan*

While most of the religious teaching will come through the total experiences in the kindergarten and the way the teacher feels about these and relates them to God, there will be special times for related stories, Bible stories and passages, times for talking things over. The "incidental approach" does not mean that the teacher leaves all to chance. She has an over-all plan. She knows her purpose and the materials she will probably use in helping to reach her goals. The church school materials for the kindergarten on Sunday give many good suggestions which can be used when they fit into the weekday experiences. Knowing the concerns of religious education—helping the child in his relationship with God, appreciation of Jesus, use of the Bible, participation in the church, understanding of himself, and relationship with other persons—the teacher is ready not only to plan for opportunities, but also to take advantage of unplanned opportune moments to guide the children further along in their experiences toward Christian living.



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## *The Growing Teacher Evaluates*

### *Measuring Teacher Growth*

"Have you stopped growing?" Steve asked Miss Brown as his height was being recorded on the "How Tall" chart. When the children had gone home, the teacher pondered this question a long time. It was not that she had stopped growing in height that troubled her, but was she really growing as a teacher and as a person?

A teacher has so many things to do that it is easy for her to get swamped in the routines of the day. She is sometimes tempted to work on an activity for which she has saved the material from other years instead of following the children's particular interests. A plan that has worked successfully with another group of children is used again regardless of its appropriateness to the present situation. But is this teaching creatively? Is it through this kind of teaching that the children and she grow? Good teaching brings about change—change in thinking, in feeling, in behavior. This change takes place in the pupil and in the teacher. But many of us resist change. The more insecure we are, the more afraid we are to change and the more excuses we give for what we do. As we begin to understand ourselves and our actions, we can more easily overcome our fears and our feelings of insecurity. Knowing about ourselves and accepting ourselves as we are will help us to understand and accept others. We need to analyze constantly the reasons for how we feel, what we think, and what we do.

As we learn about children and how they develop, our methods of working with them will change. Sometimes these changes

are hard to make. Perhaps the teacher has acquired a reputation on some phase of the program that is not a good experience for the children. Miss Rice was well known for the elaborate programs for which children learned and practiced their roles. These delighted the parents. Now Miss Rice has discovered that such programs do not provide good learning experiences for children and are not approved by the best educators. Is she willing to discontinue them? It will require courage for her to change a custom she has followed for years. Yet if she feels the responsibility for children and for becoming a better teacher, she will change her methods of working. When parents understand her new objectives, they will not want the elaborate programs, for they also seek the best for their children.

The growing teacher constantly studies children. She watches them as individuals and as members of a group. She keeps asking herself if she is using what she knows about children in working with them. When thinking of characteristics of a four- and five-year-old, one of the first that comes to mind is that he is active, always on the move. Yet does the teacher put him into situations where this impulse has to be restrained? Does he have to sit in a group too long while being talked to, listening to a long story, singing songs, or waiting for his turn to talk? Is he blamed for inattention when his body is demanding activity? Again the teacher knows that the child learns through touching and handling things, yet does she give him this opportunity as much as possible?

The statement, "Every child has his own rate for growing," is emphasized again and again. But does the teacher label Hans as immature because he is still pounding clay and rolling out "snakes" instead of making a rabbit like Jeff's or a bowl like Mary's? Does she compare one child's work with that of another or does she compare what he is doing now with what he did a month ago?

The growing teacher becomes more conscious of the needs of children. Terry is too dependent. He waits for someone to help him get off his wraps. Does she assist him just enough to encour-

age him to learn? "I'll unfasten this top button. It is hard for you to reach. You can do the others." If she is wise, she gives him enough help to keep Terry trying until he can do the job by himself. Jane needs help in standing up for her own rights. "Jane, hold on to the doll. You were playing with it. Mary can get another one." Such encouragement gives Jane the boost she needs to resist Mary's aggression. The teacher has to learn to see these situations and react to them quickly.

Sensitiveness to feelings of children and parents assists the teacher in her growing. Is she impatient over Betty's sucking her thumb or does she remember that Betty has a new brother? Can she be patient with Mrs. Smith who is not willing to give Alice up as a baby? Can she find a way to help Mrs. Smith get satisfaction in observing Alice's growth? Bill, in his frustration over having to put up the block building when the work period was over, said, "I don't like you." Is she able to accept this calmly, realizing Bill may really be saying, "I want to keep on playing. Why do I have to stop?" Even though she has to insist on Bill's putting the blocks away, she needs to remember that Bill does not feel a responsibility for the program and has little sense of time. The way she handles this will make a difference in Bill's attitude toward many things.

The growing teacher increasingly becomes more willing to listen to parents, to seek their help. She does not think she knows children better than they do. As the teacher grows, she is more aware of the necessity of working closely with parents if she is to help children develop. Is she growing in her ability to listen to parents and to know when and how to give assistance? If so, she does not feel she has to tell parents what to do, but by talking together she and the parents will find better ways of guiding children.

This teacher knows that what she is and does influences the child far more than anything she says. She is, therefore, constantly striving to improve her personal life. Having a variety of interests keeps her alert to life about her. If she is to help children enjoy beauty, she must love the beautiful. She keeps herself sensitive to



the wonders of nature. The form and color of flowers, of leaves, are sources of joy to her. The sounds out of doors—the wind blowing, the song of the birds, the tumbling waterfall, the quiet flow of the stream—attract her. The children will catch her wonder, her love for living things, and they too will grow as they wonder, as they behold beauty about them.

The teacher needs to take time for cultural improvement—listening to and enjoying good music, keeping up with world events, reading good literature, talking with friends who stimulate thinking. Broadening her own experiences and enriching her background contribute to personal growth and to what she can bring to children as she lives with them.

The teacher needs to grow professionally. There is always more to learn. Education is never completed. Working toward a goal such as a college degree or extra credits may give the needed incentive to study. Courses related to special learnings such as creative art, children's literature, or child study, help in planning for children. Keeping up with professional books, magazines, and pamphlets is important. Even a few minutes a day spent in reading will present new ideas and stimulate thinking. Every teacher should belong to one or more educational organizations that will be of special help to her. She should attend the meetings and conferences as often as possible. Association with leaders in her field will widen her horizons. In order to do these things which increase her ability to teach, she needs to budget time. Most teachers have responsibilities outside of school and so have to plan for study and reading.

Observing a well-qualified teacher work with children is a good experience. Such a visit should be planned ahead of time, an appointment made, and the visit followed by a conference with the teacher. A specific purpose for the visit stated at the time the appointment is made provides for definite help. Finding out about good equipment and arrangement of room, learning how another keeps records of children and works with parents, getting ideas for good experiences, are some topics for help that might be chosen. The teacher will want to ask questions about what she

observes. Notes jotted down during the visit will be useful in guiding discussion at the conference.

For good learning to take place, the children must like the teacher, must feel comfortable with her, must trust her. The teacher needs to be a good friend to each child. A quiet and firm but friendly voice will add to the children's feeling of warmth and security.

The teacher needs to really enjoy children, not work merely from a sense of duty. Teaching is hard as well as enjoyable. It requires physical stamina to live with young children. One must be strong, active, not easily tired, in good health. Going to bed on time, getting plenty of sleep, and eating the right food are important.

In a good weekday church kindergarten, the teacher will give religious interpretations to appropriate experiences in a natural and meaningful way. Her own faith and trust in God will permeate her whole living. She strives to be confident in her religious beliefs. Realizing her need for spiritual growth, she will continually seek to experience God through His creations, through her own prayer life, Bible study, church attendance, and reading such books as *Man's Need and God's Action*<sup>1</sup> and *The Gift of Power*.<sup>2</sup> She will not teach doctrine or impose her beliefs, but her inner strength which is felt by others comes from her spiritual life. Children will find her kind and loving, fair and just. Through the way she lives with them, they will experience love, care, justice, truth. They begin to know something of the love of God through association with one who knows Him.

Yes, the good teacher continues to grow. Living well with children and parents stimulates the growth. There will be times, of course, when one gets discouraged, when things go wrong. Looking back on experiences in teaching, one can point to some of these times as challenges that promoted greatest growth. Satisfac-

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1. *Man's Need and God's Action*, Reuel L. Howe. Seabury Press, 1953.

2. *The Gift of Power*, Lewis J. Sherrill. The Macmillan Co., 1955.

tions come as the teacher observes the growth that takes place not only within those she is guiding, but within herself as well.

### *Why Evaluate?*

Evaluation, planning, and teaching are closely related, each being dependent upon the others. Measuring the teacher's growth involves evaluation of her purposes, her understanding of children and their development, the experiences she provides, and the plan she makes for the total program. To become more effective, evaluation should be a co-operative endeavor with pupils, parents, and teachers participating at various times. Evaluation is continuous. It goes on all during the day in the several centers, during different periods. In Sue's picture is a house at one side of a large sheet of paper, the rest of the paper blank. Miss Bell said, "Sue, you have learned to paint good houses. What is around your house at home?" Sue replied, "A yard with grass and trees and flowers." Miss Bell continued, "Can you put something in the yard in your paint picture?" With this help, Sue began using more areas of the paper in her paintings, extending her thinking beyond one object.

Children had put away the work materials after the choosing activity period and were sitting on the rug. Miss Bell remarked, "Look around the room—at the shelves, at the floor. How were the blocks, trucks, and wooden animals put away? Are the books placed neatly on the bookshelves? Is the housekeeping center in order? Are the paint easels ready for another day?" Thus, Miss Bell is helping children to check on their own responsibilities—an evaluation job. Results of evaluation form a basis for next steps in individual endeavors, in group activities, and in over-all planning. Out of the class session the teacher takes time to evaluate various aspects of the program. These evaluations include changes in individuals, what has happened in group activities, outcomes of specific experiences, how materials were used, what materials have provided opportunities for growth.

Both individual development and growth in group progress

must be kept in mind. Gains are measured by comparison with previous behavior. Objectives of the kindergarten and records made early in the year form a base upon which evaluation can begin. As the individual and the group respond to experiences, direction for further planning is determined. Reinterpretation of objectives must be made in the light of children's needs, which may change from time to time.

The teacher must develop her own check list by which to measure the value of the kindergarten experiences to the children, the growth of individuals in the group, and her own growth. The observations she makes, the way she keeps records and uses them, and her involvement of children and parents will determine the worth of the evaluation. How she uses the evaluation and the timing of its use will influence the total program.

Let's think of the evaluation of the kindergarten experiences in terms of the teacher, the key person in planning and guiding experiences; of the children in whose development we are primarily interested; of the program planned to further that development; of the kindergarten area, the center of the school activities; of the parents' observations of changes that are apparent in the child's living outside of school.

### *The Growing Teacher Evaluates Her Work*

The growing teacher will ask herself such questions as:

Am I a secure person?

Am I warm and friendly toward children and adults?

Have I a sense of humor?

Do I understand myself enough to live satisfactorily with myself?

Have I inner controls which show in my voice and in the way I handle difficult situations?

Am I firm, yet pleasant, and consistent in my treatment of children?

Do I observe and study children in a way that leads to understanding them?



- Do I use this knowledge in working with children?
- Do I look for causes of behavior? Do the causes influence the way I deal with the child?
- Do I guide children rather than dominate them?
- Do I work well with adults, particularly other staff members and parents?
- Do I keep up with educational magazines and books?
- Do I continue to study?

### *The Growing Teacher Asks Herself What Is Happening to the Children*

- Are the children contented and busy except for occasional and normal outbursts?
- Are they relaxed, not tense and strained?
- Are they overstimulated?
- Are they challenged by the environment, materials, and equipment?
- Do they respond to experiences that are suited to their various stages of growth?
- Are they allowed to develop at their own rate?
- Do they take advantage of opportunities to question, to touch, to smell, to feel, to experiment?
- Do they explore life about them?
- Do they work in various groupings, trying out ways of getting along with each other?
- Do they become increasingly independent?
- Are they growing in ability to evaluate their own work and actions?
- Do they try to work out solutions to their own problems?
- Are they growing in ability to express their own thinking?
- Do they stand up for their own rights?
- Are they beginning to respect rights and possessions of others?

Are they growing in sensitivity to the interests and needs of others?

Are they developing wholesome attitudes toward themselves, other people, and things?

These questions need to be considered in noting changes in behavior of individuals as well as of groups.

### *The Growing Teacher Evaluates the Program*

Is it flexible?

Is it a balanced program as to strenuous and more quiet activities?

Is it an unhurried program? The four- and five-year-olds have little sense of time.

Is it too stimulating? Are the children overtired at the end of the day?

Is there provision for play indoors and outdoors?

Are there experiences provided for the use of many types of materials? Is the quantity of materials enough for experimentation? This includes blocks, trucks, and other accessories, housekeeping materials, paints of various kinds, clay and other modeling materials, crayons, scissors, different kinds of paper, paste, scraps of cloth, ribbons, yarns, and such. The child needs enough material to try out many ideas. A small ball of clay restricts his manipulation of the medium. He needs enough blocks to complete his plans without being frustrated because of too limited a supply. On the other hand, are too many kinds of materials available at one time? This may confuse the child when he is making a choice.

Are there provided many types of music experiences, such as singing, creative rhythmic expression, listening and responding to records, trying out musical instruments of various sounds, listening to good music on organ, piano, violin?

Do the activities give a chance for sharing, taking turns, accepting responsibilities?

Are there experiences that lead to appreciation of others?

Are there opportunities for the enjoyment of beauty?

Are there experiences in group participation?

Are there experiences that lead to spiritual growth?

Is their health protected? Sick children should be kept at home. Anyone who becomes ill at school should be isolated until he can be sent home. Health and safety measures must be observed throughout the entire program.

## *The Teacher Evaluates the Kindergarten Area*

### INDOOR AREA

Is the kindergarten located on the ground floor near easily accessible exits? A door leading to the playground is desirable.

Is there space—35 to 50 square feet per child—to work and play with ease?

Are there enough windows to give the room light and air, yet permit no glare? Windows should be low enough (24"—28") so that children can see out.

Is there good artificial light for dark days?

Are the children protected from drafts? Can the heat be kept at a constant temperature in winter? 72 degrees at the child's level is recommended.

Are there low, open shelves for toys, blocks, books? Are these placed so that children can use them?

Is there storage space for equipment that is not always in use and for supplies for the teacher?

Is there adequate arrangement for hanging up wraps and taking care of children's hats, galoshes, umbrellas? Is this so placed that children can use it by themselves?

- Is there a good bulletin board at the height for children to put up pictures, see and touch them? Twelve to fifteen feet in continuous length can be used for many purposes.
- Is the room kept clean and neat? Rugs need to be vacuumed each day, floors swept each day and washed often, furniture dusted.
- Are there plants and flowers in the room? Is there provision for nature materials that are brought by teacher and children?
- Is the room arranged so that children can best use centers of interest?
- Are appropriate pictures hung on the level of the child's vision?
- Are the toilets child-size? Are they near the kindergarten room? There should be a toilet for each eight children.
- Are the wash basins at a height where the children can easily use them? Soap and paper towels are necessary. A mirror over each basin is desirable. The toilets must be cleaned daily.
- Is there a low drinking fountain convenient to the kindergarten area? Children should not have to walk down long halls to go to the toilet or to get a drink of water.

### OUTDOOR AREA

- Is the playground area adequate? Seventy-five to one hundred square feet per child is recommended. There should be sun and shade areas on the playground. If the playground is not in a protected area, a fence is necessary. This gives a boundary for play as well as protection from the outside. The playground should be located near the kindergarten indoor area. If the room opens on to the playground, the play area can be used many more times during the day, sometimes



by small groups of children whom the teacher can watch from the room.

Is the outdoor equipment adequate for strenuous play?

Is it safe for children to use?

Is there a toilet near the playground?

### *Parents Observe Outcomes and Evaluate*

Parents observe outcomes of kindergarten experiences and evaluate them with the teacher at her request.

How does the child act when he gets home from school?

Is he overtired? Does he enjoy his lunch? What does he talk about?

Does he like to go to school? Has he accepted the necessary routines with no, or only occasional, conflicts?

Does he show any growth in the following?

Making his own decisions

Solving his problems

Thinking clearly

Expressing his ideas

Becoming more independent

Increasing his attention span

Carrying out simple directions

Getting along with others

Standing up for his own rights

Respecting the rights and property of others

Choosing his activities

Enjoying stories and looking at picture books

Showing interest in nature

Have you noticed a carry-over into the home of any religious experiences he has had in kindergarten?

Give any evidence of growth which you may have observed.

Give suggestions for improvement of the kindergarten program in the light of how your child has responded to what has been offered.

## *Possibilities for Improvement*

As the teacher evaluates herself, the program, and the school area in the light of what is happening to children, she will decide the most important steps to take next. Maybe new equipment and materials should be bought. Perhaps new and more varied experiences should be provided. A different philosophy of education might be needed. The staff and the parents may need help in guidance. It may be necessary to call in a consultant to advise how changes can be made. Help may be sought from someone in the local school system, the state board of education, or from a college in the state. If the school is a church-sponsored one, the denomination or state or local council of churches may have facilities for counseling. When the need is really felt, improvement can result that will mean better education for children. Continuous evaluation is necessary in order to provide good living and learning experiences for children.

### RESOURCE BOOKS

- A Child Development Point of View*, James L. Hymes, Jr. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1955.
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### PAMPHLETS

- "Planning for America's Children." Office of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington, D. C., 1955.
- "Schools for Young Children." Publication No. 305, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Raleigh, N. C., 1955.
- "Self-Understanding," William C. Menninger. Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1951.

### MAGAZINES

- Childhood Education*, Association for Childhood Education International, 1200 Fifteenth St., N.W., Washington, D. C.
- The Journal of Nursery Education*, 155 East Ohio St., Chicago 11, Ill.
- Your Today's Child*, Newsletter, 1225 Broadway, New York 1, N. Y.

## ORGANIZATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP AND CONFERENCES

American Association of University Women, 1634 Eye St., Washington 6, D. C.  
Association for Childhood Education International, 1200 Fifteenth St., N.W.,  
Washington 5, D. C.

National Association for Nursery Education, Distribution Center, 155 East  
Ohio St., Chicago 11, Ill.

Children's Work Associated Section, National Council of Churches, 257  
Fourth Ave., New York.

Southern Association on Children Under Six (no headquarters—yearly conferences).

Some of these associations have local branches working for children in their particular communities.



## *Church Weekday Kindergarten*

### *Trend*

In the last decade there has been an increase in the number of churches sponsoring weekday kindergartens. More parents see the importance of good group experiences for children of this age and are seeking schools for them. In many communities, public schools do not extend their services to four- and five-year-olds. In others, public school kindergartens are overcrowded. Many churches have good housing facilities for young children, including large rooms on the first floor of the educational building. These rooms have basic equipment suitable for children. It has been a concern of some people that the use of these facilities is limited to Sundays and to special weekday programs, such as vacation church school.

### *Before Starting a Church Kindergarten*

The building, adequate as it may be, the church school equipment, and the desire for a weekday school are not sufficient to provide good educational experiences for children. Good planning takes time, study, and effort. The total program must be studied, including what services will be offered, the relation of these services to the educational program of the church, finances needed, and the staff required.

Should the particular church provide a weekday kindergarten? This is the first question to be answered. It calls for consideration of the over-all educational program of the church for young children. Does such a project fit into those plans? Are the workers in



the Sunday program in accord with the idea of a weekday school? Using the same rooms and some of the same equipment on Sundays and weekdays calls for co-operation of all concerned. Neither the Sunday program nor the weekday program should suffer because of the other. Both belong to the total educational program of the church and each should strengthen the work of the other. Do the officials of the church see the opportunities for this expansion of service and are they willing to support it by their interest and through financial contribution? Is the present church staff sympathetic to the idea of adding this service? Do the parents of young children want the school? Are these services needed in the particular community? It will be necessary to discover what educational services of this kind are already available. If there are enough good schools for young children in the community, the church should explore other services more needed. Are the housing facilities and space adequate? Is there available playground space? The church should not attempt a school unless a qualified professional staff is obtainable and other standards of a good school can be met. Many state departments of education have a staff member to work with schools for children under six.

## *Benefits of the Kindergarten*

### FOR CHILDREN

The good church kindergarten provides good educational experiences in keeping with the standards of a good school. Here each child will be treated as an individual, have opportunities to cultivate right attitudes and feelings, to become more independent, to use a variety of materials and equipment, to express himself creatively, to develop in a comfortable environment. The church has a particular responsibility to provide experiences within a religious environment where children may develop and practice Christian ways of living, each within the limits of his capacity.

## FOR FAMILIES

A school at the church helps to develop a closer relationship between families and the church. Contacts are made with parents as they bring their children to school, through home visitations, through parents visiting the school and participating in the program. The teachers are available for counseling at the church. They can help open the way for counseling by the minister when this is needed. In conferences with parents, personal and church relationships are strengthened as well as help given in solving problems.

## FOR THE CHURCH

It is important that the director of the weekday kindergarten work closely with the staff of the Sunday kindergarten. Much of the equipment may be used jointly. The professional staff of the weekday school can well serve as consultants to the workers in the regular Sunday session of the church school. Their knowledge of children can help in the planning sessions, can suggest to teachers other ways of working, and can be of assistance in choosing equipment.

The weekday kindergarten usually makes it possible to have additional facilities for the Sunday sessions, thus enriching the program on Sundays. While there is some equipment for the weekday school that is not of practical use for Sunday sessions, there is much that can be used by both groups, such as blocks, trucks, housekeeping equipment.

Through their close contacts with the weekday program, parents of the kindergarten children see good teaching methods demonstrated. They often become interested in volunteering their service for the Sunday sessions and for the vacation church school.

Rooms that are normally used only on Sunday mornings are used an additional fifteen hours or more a week and make possible more services to children.

Non-church people of the community are often reached through the opportunity of enrolling children in the weekday program.

## FOR THE COMMUNITY

Good kindergartens sponsored by churches can demonstrate to the community desirable educational programs for four- and five-year-olds. In communities where there are no kindergartens in public schools, the church-sponsored kindergarten can demonstrate the value of such education for young children. This may create a demand for more kindergartens and influence boards of public schools to include them in their programs. Thus this educational opportunity will be offered to more children.

*Relation to the Total Program of Education*

The weekday school is sponsored by the church and should be under the guidance of the church board or committee of Christian education. It should be considered as part of the total education of the church and plans made accordingly. The board or committee should appoint a special weekday kindergarten committee whose duty is to plan administrative details of the program. This committee will be responsible for setting up standards, securing qualified teachers, passing on admissions and enrollment, establishing policies, proposing a financial budget, authorizing purchase of equipment, evaluating the program, and establishing a working relation between the weekday kindergarten and the church school. This committee reports to the board or committee of Christian education under which it works. The kindergarten committee should be composed of a member of the official board of the church, the director of Christian education, a working member of the preschool division of the Sunday church school, a parent representative from the weekday group. Each member of the committee should know good education for the preschool child. The director of the weekday kindergarten should have a close working relationship with this committee. Her preparation and experience should be relied upon in making decisions. She will be responsible for carrying out the administrative policies. Consultation service of professional experts in the field of early childhood education should be procured as needed.

## *Standards*

Some states and local communities have established minimum standards for schools for young children. Before planning a church school kindergarten, these standards should be studied. They deal primarily with provisions for health and fire protection, sanitation, safety. The number of children in a group, number of teachers to a group, space and location of rooms, are often included.

The kindergarten committee, before beginning a school, needs to study adequate housing, qualifications for the personnel, and the type of program for approved schools. Before the age of children is set for registration, information on the state minimum entrance-age law should be secured. When children leave the kindergarten group they should be within this entrance-age law in order to enter the first grade of public schools.

Information concerning standards may be secured from state departments of education, local community agencies responsible for such services to children, and from educational organizations concerned with the well-being of children. Information can also be secured from the Office of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington, D. C. Various aspects of a good program for children are discussed in other chapters of this book.

## *Finances*

The kindergarten committee should propose a budget to be approved by the board or committee of Christian education of the church. Such a budget includes salaries of director, teachers, assistants, substitutes, and maid; equipment for indoors, and outdoors; necessary supplies; repair of equipment. The sources of income are tuition paid by parents, donated scholarships, and assistance from the church. If the church will provide in its budget for accident insurance, social security on salaries, permanent equipment, repairs of equipment, heating and lighting, and janitorial service, the tuition paid by parents and the scholarship fund



should be adequate to take care of salaries and expendable supplies. The tuition rates should be determined in the light of a carefully planned budget and the prevailing fees of those private kindergartens in the community giving professional service to children. If, after the committee of Christian education has approved the proposed budget, the income is found to be inadequate, the church should supplement the needed amount and underwrite the salaries of the staff.

### *Kindergarten Staff*

The size of the staff will be determined by the number of children in the school, their ages, and the way in which they are grouped. A group of four-year-olds or of five-year-olds should be limited to twenty. On the average there should be one adult for each eight to twelve children in a group. If the group is small enough to require only one teacher, another adult should be available in the building for any emergency.

The educational standard for a qualified teacher should be a college degree with special education and experience in early childhood education. She needs to be a mature Christian person who understands children and adults, and has tact and ability in working with parents. The assistants need to be well-adjusted adults who like and understand children and have enough education to enable them to be a part of the working team and to grow through in-service experience.

In determining the salary of the teacher, the length of her working day must be considered. While the kindergarten session may be fifteen hours a week, the leading teacher of each group usually has a forty-hour week. This allows for a half-hour before and also after the regular hours of each session in order to be with the children who come early and leave late. Preparation for next day, buying equipment, extra school duties, take about twelve and a half hours each week. Visiting parents and holding parent conferences take about seven and a half hours a week. The teacher has to adjust the hours for preparation, parent confer-

ences, and professional meetings. Much of her work is done away from the school building, and it is, therefore, hard to state the exact hours she is on duty. The assistant teacher does not carry the heavy responsibilities that the director or leading teacher does. Prevailing salaries in public schools for like services should influence the salaries paid in the church weekday kindergarten. Provision for salary credit for study in the field of early childhood education should be made every two or three years. This will encourage teachers to continue to improve their teaching.

### *Responsibilities of Staff Members*

When there are several groups of children in the kindergarten school, a leading teacher of one group should be given the added responsibility of being director of the school to co-ordinate the total program. The director is responsible for purchasing material, supplies, and equipment, after authorization by the kindergarten committee. She sees that the general set-up of the kindergarten rooms is kept in order. The maid is under her direction. The leading teacher of a group is responsible for contacts and conferences with parents of that group. With the help of the assistant she plans the kindergarten program in the light of the children's needs, an evaluation of their growth, and an evaluation of their reactions to experiences provided. They confer together about children and methods of working with individuals. She reports to the kindergarten director if there is one, otherwise to the chairman of the kindergarten committee, keeping him in touch with the total program, informing him of needs, and seeking advice on problems and future planning. If there is a director, she gets reports from leading teachers and does the reporting to the chairman. The assistant works under the direction of the leading teacher of a group.

### *Housing*

The kindergarten room or rooms should be on the ground floor of a fireproof building. They should never be basement

rooms below ground level. The room should be easily reached without a long walk through halls. Since sunlight is desirable, south and east exposures are best. The window area should be at least one-fifth of the floor area and so arranged that all of the room receives light. It is desirable that sills be twenty-four to twenty-eight inches high in order to permit children to see out of doors. Hard, smooth, and washable walls are advisable. Adequate floor space requires thirty-five to fifty square feet per child. Since children play and sit on the floor for many of their activities, it is necessary to have the floor warm, free from draft, and clean. Heavy linoleum covering or hardwood floors are suggested. A large rug easily cleaned provides a place for group gatherings.

Within easy access to the kindergarten rooms there should be located a drinking fountain, twenty-four inches high. There should be one toilet, seat ten inches from the floor, and one wash bowl, twenty-four inches from the floor, for each eight children.

The playground, allowing seventy-five to one hundred square feet per child, should be easily accessible to the kindergarten rooms. This needs to include space for a garden, pets, play apparatus, a grass plot, and a paved area. Shade and sun areas are recommended. A level, hard-surfaced area is excellent for activities with wheel toys; a grassy plot provides a place for running, jumping, rolling. Climbing apparatus is needed. An outdoor storage space is necessary for taking care of tricycles, wagons, sand toys, and other equipment.

In planning for young children, the following must be provided: space, indoors and outdoors, for safe, free play; convenient and adequate toilet and washing facilities; equipment and materials that foster exploration, imagination, and creative expression.

### *When Is a Church Ready to Start a Weekday Kindergarten?*

When the need has been determined and a sufficient number of children can be enrolled.

When the organization for setting up and administering the school has been completed.

When a plan for adequately financing the project has been adopted.

When adequate outdoor and indoor space is provided.

When safety, sanitary, and health standards are met.

When qualified teachers and assistants have been secured.

When suitable equipment and supplies have been purchased.

When there has been adopted a sound philosophy of education that will guide the physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual growth of young children.

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"The Church and Children Under Four." Leaflet 6, Portfolio, National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., 120 E. 3rd St., New York, N. Y.

For information, write the board of education of the denomination of the church which sponsors the kindergarten.

For information on standards of health, safety, and program, write: American Association of University Women, 1634 Eye St., Washington 6, D. C.

Association for Childhood Education International, 1200 Fifteenth St. N.W., Washington 5, D. C.

National Association for Nursery Education, 155 East Ohio St., Chicago 11, Ill.

Office of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington 25, D. C.

State Department of Education in your state.



## INDEX



# *Index*

- Art, 15-16, 21-22, 68  
materials for, 15, 21, 66, 68-69, 71-73
- Basic needs, 31-36
- Bible  
stories, 55, 126  
use of, 125-127  
verses, 126-127
- Birthdays, 113-114
- Blocks  
center, 21, 66  
kinds, 66, 69-71  
use of, 65, 73
- Books  
care of, 81  
for children, bibliography, 62, 82-85, 96-97, 99, 101, 104, 105, 107, 108, 111, 113-114  
kinds of, 80-85  
for parents, 24, 35, 36, 37, 59, 91-92, 105, 129  
for teachers, 23-24, 35, 36-37, 59, 91-92, 105, 129, 134, 142, 152  
use of, 81
- Centers of interest, 65-67  
art, 66, 68  
blocks, 66-67, 69  
books, puzzles, 67, 70  
housekeeping, 66, 70  
science, 66, 67
- Child development  
basic needs, 31-36  
development in the group, 35-36  
differences in, 25-28  
evaluation of, 137-138  
general characteristics, 28-31  
how children learn, 63-65  
how to understand children, 33-36  
relationship with others, 128
- Christmas, 102-106
- Church, participation in, 127
- Class size, 47
- Clay, 78
- Clean-up time, 21-22, 55, 85  
evaluation of, 135
- Clothing, 53  
care of, 22
- Conferences with parents, 43-46
- Confidential record, 57-58
- Curriculum, 60-115  
definition of, 60, 115  
evaluation of, 137-141  
guidance reminders, 90-91  
guides for planning, 60-63
- Development of child (*see* Child development)
- Dramatic play, 12-14, 36, 87, 96
- Easter, 109-112
- Environment, 20, 90, 94
- Equipment, 14-15, 21

- indoor, 69-70
- outdoor, 70-71
- placement of, 21-22, 67
- sources, 71
- use of, 15, 21-22, 73-74
- Evaluation
  - curriculum, 135-142
  - kindergarten area, 139-141
  - parents evaluate outcomes, 141
  - program, 138-139
  - teacher evaluates self, 130-135, 136-137
- Excursions, 75-78
- Experiences
  - dramatic, 13-14, 96
  - group, 35-36, 55, 73-78, 86
  - individual, 78
  - outdoor, 56, 87
  - religious, 17-18, 55, 96, 100-104, 109-111, 116-117, 119
  - work-play, 73-75
- Fall, 94-98
- Finances, 148-149
- Finger painting, 68-69
  - recipe for paint, 72
- First school days, 19-23
- Flour paste, recipe for, 72
- Furniture, size, 66
- Group participation, 35-36
- Halloween, 98-100
- Health, 31, 46, 85
- Home visits, 42, 50
- Housekeeping center, 66, 67
- Housing of kindergarten, 150-151
- How children learn, 63-65
- Kindergarten area
  - arrangement, 67
  - indoor, 139-140
  - outdoor, 140-141
  - space, 66, 139, 140
- Kindergarten, church weekday
  - before starting, 144-145
  - benefits, 145-147
  - end of school year, 114-115
  - finances, 148-149
  - first days, 19-23
  - getting child ready, 52
  - need for, 11, 19
  - registration, 41-42
  - relation to church program, 147
  - religious values, 17-18
  - staff, 149-150
  - standards, 148
  - when to start, 151-152
- Library
  - time, 56
  - visit to, 75
- Lunch, 56, 86, 101, 108, 113
  - picnic lunch, 35, 115
- Magazines, 142
- Materials, kindergarten, 66, 69-71
  - helpful hints, 71-72
  - use of, 15-17, 21
- Minister, experiences with, 121-122
- Modeling dough, recipe for, 72-73
- Motor control, 29-30
- Music, 17, 36, 56, 66, 68, 79, 87
  - books, 62, 92, 97-98, 99-100, 101-102, 105-106, 107, 109, 112, 114
- Number concepts, 74-75
- Observation of children, 53-54
- Organizations, educational, 143
- Parents
  - conferences with, 43-46
  - evaluate outcomes, 141
  - materials for, 52-56
  - meetings, 42, 49-50
  - participation of, 51, 102-104
  - understanding, 38-40



- visiting at school, 43, 53-56
- visits to homes of, 42, 50
- Picnic, as group experience, 35, 115
- Pictures, 20, 63, 94
- Play
  - dramatic, 12-14, 36, 87, 96
  - need for, 12-14
  - outdoor, 56, 87
- Poems (*see* Books)
- Prayer, 100, 101, 104, 123
- Program, 54-57, 85-87
- Questions, children's, 17, 116-117
- Reading, 79, 80
  - contributions to readiness for, 17, 18
- Record player, 68, 70, 79
- Recordings, 106, 114
- Records
  - anecdotal, 47
  - confidential, 57-58
  - group, 49
  - individual, 46-49
  - sample of, 47-49
  - use of, 43-45
- Religious experiences
  - for children, 17-18, 96, 100-104, 109-111, 116-117
  - for teachers, 134
- Rest time, 56, 86-87
- Rhythm band, 68
- Rhythms, 17, 56, 68, 79
- Room arrangement, 65-67
- Safety measures, 53
- Schedule, organization of, 85
- School visits, 43, 53-56
- Science, 16-17, 64, 95-96, 98, 106, 109-111
- Space, 66
- Special occasions, 51-52, 93, 102-104, 114-115
- Spiritual development, 17-18, 26-28, 32, 55, 62, 100-104, 116-129, 134
- Spring, 109-112
- Staff, 149-150
- Standards, 148
- Stories
  - dictated by the children, 78, 115
  - general, 22-23, 62, 80, 82-85, 86, 94, 96, 97, 99, 101, 103, 104-105, 106-107, 108, 111, 113, 123-125, 128
  - religious, 55, 82, 83, 86, 101, 104, 128
- Teacher, 130-142
  - evaluates her work, 136-137, 142
  - growth, 130-135
  - individual differences, 40-41
  - relationships with others, 41
- Thanksgiving, 100-102
- Toilet time, 55-56, 86
- Tools for learning, 21, 69-71
- Understanding children, 33-36
- Valentine's Day, 108-109
- Visiting at school, 43, 54-56
- Winter, 106-107
- Work-play activities, 55, 56
- Worship, 100-101, 103-104, 109, 110-111, 122-125







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